

Ankara, Tehran agree to cooperate on border security

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey and Iran agreed Wednesday to cooperate on border security during a visit here by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Emini-zad, the Anadolu news agency reported. A direct telephone link will be installed between the armies on both sides of their shared border to enable "effective" cooperation between the two countries, the agency said. A meeting will take place next week to determine who will be responsible for the line on each side and to make the line operational. Ankara has frequently criticised Iran for "closing its eyes" to border infiltration by rebels from the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK), a charge which Tehran has denied.

Jordan Times

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Chechen president introduces Islamic law

MOSCOW (AP) — Meeting a key demand of his opponents, Chechnya's president on Wednesday ordered the establishment of Islamic law in the breakaway republic, sharply curtailing parliament's powers and ordering that an Islamic constitution be written. President Aslan Maskhadov signed several decrees Wednesday, ordering the establishment of "full-scale" Islamic law, effective immediately, Russian news agencies reported. Maskhadov revoked parliament's legislative functions and ordered the body to cooperate with Muslim leaders to write an Islamic constitution within three months.

Turkish court files case against Kurd party

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Turkey's constitutional court on Wednesday opened a case to outlaw the country's main Kurdish party for alleged links to Abdullah Ocalan's guerrilla group, Anadolu news agency said. The charges were brought by headline Chief Prosecutor Vural Savas who accused the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) of recruiting guerrillas for the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK), which has fought a 14-year armed campaign for Kurdish self-rule. HADEP advocates a peaceful resolution to the conflict which has cost more than 29,000 lives.

U.S. judge denies new hearing for death row inmate

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A U.S. federal judge rejected Wednesday a request for a new clemency hearing for a death row inmate on the eve of the man's scheduled execution for three killings committed when he was 16 years old. Sean Sellers, 29, was scheduled to die by lethal injection early Thursday at the southern U.S. Oklahoma State Penitentiary for the shooting deaths of his mother, stepfather and a convenience store clerk in Oklahoma City.

'As many 4,000 U.S. troops may go to Kosovo'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States may contribute as many as 4,000 troops to a NATO ground force in Kosovo if the warring sides reach a peace settlement, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said Wednesday. Army General Henry Shelton said the size of the force will depend on what kind of peace agreement is reached between Belgrade and the KLA, but he said the U.S. goal was to have the Europeans provide most troops. Shelton said no exit date should be set going into the deployment in Kosovo, as the administration initially did in Bosnia, raising the prospects for a long-term commitment of U.S. forces in the southern Serbian province.

8 killed in Indian tribal violence

NEW DELHI (AP) — Out-lawed maoist guerrillas clashed with rival groups in northeastern India and set fire to huts Wednesday, leaving eight people dead and flames raging through villages, domestic news agencies reported. Nearly 25 armed members of the National Liberation Front of Tripura swooped on a village in the Tripura state late on Tuesday killing four people and wounding two others, Press Trust of India reported. The killings came in a series of sporadic flare-ups of violence between tribal and non-tribal groups in the thickly forested

House 'partially' lifts deputy's immunity

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament on Wednesday voted in favour of "partially" lifting the immunity of Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi to allow security authorities to interrogate him on rape charges, the first such decision in the history of Parliament.

The move, approved by 42 out of 64 lawmakers present during the discussion, allows the public prosecutor to interrogate Abbadi but denies him the right to detain the deputy or remand him to court.

It followed a recommendation by the House Legal Committee proposing a partial lifting of immunity.

Two sisters, aged 14 and 20, pressed charges in November against Abbadi claiming that he had raped them.

The public prosecutor wrote to Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh demanding that the 80-member Lower House lift the deputy's immunity to allow for his

interrogation.

Earlier this week, Parliament requested a clarification from the Higher Council for the Interpretation of the Constitution as to the legality of a partial lifting of immunity following protests from lawmakers, who said that the recommendation to lift immunity was interfering in the judicial process.

During Wednesday's session, House Speaker Abdul Hadi Majali told deputies that the decision to refer the case to the council was illegal because it had not been approved by the majority of the lawmakers during Sunday's session. The referral of the case to the council was approved by a simple majority of 33 out of 65.

Abbadi told his colleagues that the case was lodged against him by "influential politicians" who were upset by his political stands.

"It is a set-up case by certain people whom I know very well and whose identities I will reveal," Abbadi, known for his controversial



Members of the Lower House of Parliament meet Wednesday to discuss lifting a colleague's immunity (Petra photo)

political stands, said during the session.

He urged his colleagues not to take a long time in dis-

cussing the issue and to vote either to reject or approve the recommendation.

The decision to lift the

immunity took everyone by surprise following heated debates over the past 10 days between lawmakers.

Arafat, Albright hold talks on 'revolving door' for prisoners

WASHINGTON (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat affirmed Wednesday his intention of carrying out the stalled West Bank accords with Israel.

"I am insistent on following up the peace process," Arafat told reporters after a 40-minute meeting with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

The process is stalled, with Israel refusing to yield more land until the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) imposes tougher restraints on "terrorism" and prosecutes suspects.

On another touchy subject, he said Palestinian leaders were grappling with the question of a Palestinian state. "This can't be mentioned now," Arafat said.

The Palestinian leader got a boost before arriving, though, when the State Department announced it had no evidence to support Israeli accusations that suspects in attacks on Americans had been set free.

"Those charges, so far as we can tell, are simply not proven by any evidence," State Department spokesman James Rubin said Tuesday.

Concerns about whether "terrorist" suspects are treated leniently by Palestinian authorities also were raised by Albright at her meeting with Arafat, Rubin said.

They also surveyed the stalled West Bank process and agreed to hold a meeting in mid-February of a joint U.S.-Palestinian commission to develop trade, scientific and cultural ties, Rubin said.

While Rubin disputed Israel's assertion, he said that

"with respect to other related issues of larger numbers of people in the revolving door, let me say that we do have concerns."

The "revolving door" is a reference to Israeli claims that suspects are detained and then quietly let go.

Another touchy issue is Arafat's periodic declarations that the Palestinians will establish a state whatever the outcome of negotiations with Israel.

Senator Sam Brownback said he would introduce a resolution opposing the unilateral declaration of a state. It would violate Palestinian-Israeli understandings "and the United States should not recognise any such declaration," Brownback said.

Arafat was meeting with Albright and members of Congress Wednesday, and hoped to have a few minutes with President Bill Clinton at a prayer breakfast Thursday.

His participation has sparked complaints by some Christian fundamentalists. Randy Tate, executive director of the Christian Coalition, said he would boycott the breakfast. To attend, Tate said, "would provide legitimacy to an unrepentant terrorist who has the blood of thousands on his hands."

Similarly, Thad Pinney, communications director for the Traditional Values Coalition, which represents 40,000 churches, said: "We are encouraging congressmen to boycott the breakfast because Arafat is an unrepentant terrorist."

(Continued on page 7)

Weizman cuts terms for Israelis who killed Arabs

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman cut the prison sentences Wednesday of three Israelis jailed for murdering Palestinians and two others convicted of the attempted murder of an Arab, his office announced.

Acting at the demand of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government, Weizman notably commuted the life sentence of Ami Popper, who killed seven Palestinian labourers in a 1990 shooting spree near Tel Aviv, to 40 years.

"The president agreed to reduce the sentences of Israelis involved in anti-Arab attacks in the same way that he has cut the terms of Palestinians who carried out anti-Israeli attacks," said Arie Shumner, Weizman's chief of staff.

Israeli Arab lawmaker Talib Al Sana said that the president applied a double standard.

"An Arab prisoner that didn't kill a single Jew had his sentence reduced to 40 years," Al Sana said. "And today we hear, for example, that Ami Popper who killed seven Arabs had his sentence

reduced to 40 years. That's a discriminatory approach."

Ibrahim Abu Dakka, whose son was killed by Popper, said the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) should seek his extradition.

"The very idea of reducing the sentence of those killers is an ugly crime. It is an affront to those who were martyred," Abu Dakka, 65, told Reuters.

The partial pardons were requested by Justice Minister Tsahi Hanegbi and came just three months before general elections in which Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party is seeking to rally support of the Israeli far-right.

Weizman's order reduced by four years the 15-year sentence of Yoram Skolnik, who was jailed in 1993 for shooting a bound Palestinian man who had been captured after stabbing a Jewish settler in the West Bank.

Skolnik was originally jailed for life but Weizman already commuted the sentence to 15 years.

Nehemia Michbaum, who killed a Palestinian man by throwing a hand grenade into a market in the Old City of

Arab east Jerusalem in 1992, had his term reduced from 12 years to 10 years.

Also benefiting from Wednesday's decision were two brothers, Yehodav and Eitan Kahalani, who were sentenced to 12 years in prison for the attempted murder of a Palestinian and had their terms cut to eight years.

In justifying his request for the presidential pardons, Hanegbi said that in recent years "thousands of Palestinian prisoners convicted of anti-Israeli attacks had been released."

"That's why I felt it justified to recommend the reduction of prison sentences of Jews condemned for anti-Arab attacks," he said, adding that all the Israeli prisoners had "expressed regret" for their actions.

"What the government and the justice minister did here was set one principle for Jewish murderers and another for Arab murderers. This is unacceptable," said Israeli legislator Yossi Sarid of the leftist Meretz Party.

(Continued on page 7)

Crown Prince receives message from Holy See

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, has received a congratulatory message sent on behalf of Pope John Paul II on his designation as heir to the Throne.

In the message, delivered by the Apostolic Nunciature in the Kingdom to the Jordan Times on Wednesday, Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano assured the Crown Prince of the prayers of the Pope John Paul II for the well-being of the people of Jordan and for the peace and security of all the peoples of the Middle East.

The Regent yesterday also received representatives of Arab and foreign leaders, who congratulated him on his appointment as successor to the Throne.

Prince Abdullah received a cable from Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov,

who stressed the two countries' friendship and cooperation.

The Crown Prince received Mauritanian Prime Minister Sheikh Afia Weld Mohammed Khouma, UAE Ambassador Ahmad Ali Meil Zu'abi, Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Ali Subhani, U.S. Ambassador William Burns, German Ambassador Peter Meude, Swiss Confederation Ambassador Gian Federico Pedotti, French Ambassador Bernard Emié and Belgian Ambassador Philippe Kums.

The Regent Wednesday sent a congratulatory cable to Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga on the occasion of her country's national day.

Prince Abdullah is expected to receive Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon here on Sunday for talks.



Henam, the daughter of Yousef Abu Dakka, who was killed with another six Palestinians by Israeli Ami Popper in an indiscriminate shooting in 1990, shows a portrait of her father at her home at Khan Younes in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday (Reuters photo)

U.N. General Assembly to meet on Israel settlements

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. General Assembly is to meet in emergency session Friday to vote on a new condemnation of Israel's settlement policy and prospects for a U.N. conference.

U.N. General Assembly spokeswoman Jadranka Mihalich told AFP that the emergency special session would be held at the request of Jordan, on behalf of Arab states, and South Africa for the non-aligned.

The draft resolution obtained by AFP reiterates a U.N. condemnation of "the failure of the government of Israel to comply" with earlier assembly resolutions calling for an immediate halt to the building of new settlements.

The resolution comes under the heading of "Illegal Israeli Actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory."

But Western diplomats said that the draft's most contro-

versial point concerns a proposal for a conference on the protection of Palestinians to be held on March 4 either at U.N. headquarters in New York or in Geneva.

The conference, which was first requested by a General Assembly resolution in November 1997, would be attended by the parties to the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war.

The last experts' meeting

aimed at preparing for the proposed conference was held in Geneva last October.

Washington remains opposed to fixing any date for such an international conference, pointing to the timing of such an event just ahead of Israeli elections in May, Western diplomats said.

The United States insists that the issue of a Middle East settlement should be kept out of the United Nations, and an agreement negotiated between the par-

ties themselves.

Diplomats said that the 15-nation European Union, which usually plays a key role in General Assembly resolutions on the Middle East, was still attempting to reach a unified final position regarding the draft resolution.

One proposal under discussion was for the resolution to call for the conference to be convened "as soon as possible," a Western diplomat said.

'Smooth' change of succession underlines strength of country's institutions, analysts say

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As HRH Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, moved to assume his new responsibilities as second in line to the Throne, Jordanians anxiously await good news of His Majesty King Hussein's health.

The Monarch, the region's longest-serving ruler, will remain under close monitoring for the next two weeks after Tuesday's bone marrow transplant, but officials said first indications were positive.

"We are praying to God to save His Majesty... and to end the state of anxiety and confusion gripping

us since he returned to the U.S. for renewed treatment," wrote Sultan Hattab in the mass-circulation daily Al Ra'i.

The King was rushed back to the Mayo Clinic in the United States on Jan. 25, a month after being discharged from the same hospital following six months of treatment for non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

Hours before he left Amman, the King designated his eldest son, Prince Abdullah, as Crown Prince and relieved HRH Prince Hassan from his duties after grooming him for 34 years. In a letter to Prince Hassan, the King charged his younger brother with abuse of

power in his absence.

Officials said Prince Abdullah, an army major general, marched smartly into the affairs of state, heading a Cabinet session and meeting with scores of Arab and foreign dignitaries who flew in to congratulate him and offer their support.

Foreign guests included U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright — who revised her Middle East trip itinerary last week to reaffirm U.S. support for Jordan — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and a stream of Gulf Arab princes and sheikhs and the son of Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.

Prince Abdullah assured Arafat, grappling with a stalled peace process, that Jordan stands behind the Palestinian people.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu telephoned to congratulate the Crown Prince. With Israel facing elections this May and two-thirds of the electorate supporting peace, all camps are competing to prove their peace credentials with the Palestinians, Jordan and the United States. Netanyahu is coming to Amman on Sunday for talks with Prince Abdullah and senior officials.

Prince Abdullah's message to the region's leaders was that he will

continue King Hussein's policies.

King Hussein has stayed in close contact with Prince Abdullah who is keeping him informed of developments at home, officials have said.

"It is an extraordinary time for us all, but things are running as smooth as they can, given the difficult situation," said a senior government official. "We have concerns but we are not worried about the future of the country," he told the Jordan Times, echoing commonly heard views in official circles.

"We have to be more forward-looking and we have to achieve

more national cohesion and improve our efficiency as these are our main challenges."

During a hectic week, the new Crown Prince welcomed and met with Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz, one of three senior Saudi officials who arrived in Amman in a strong show of support for Prince Abdullah.

The 37-year-old Prince has in recent years cultivated solid relations with the younger generation of Gulf princes, especially those in the military.

(Continued on page 7)

Defence minister pledges to strengthen settlements

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's defence minister wants to strengthen Jewish settlements in the coming months amid concerns that a more dovish government could come to power in May elections and impose a construction freeze, an advisor said Wednesday.

Moshe Arens, who was named to the defence post last month, won effusive praise from Jewish settler leaders. "The feeling is that, finally, we have our defence minister," settler leader Pinhas Wallerstein told Israel Radio.

All construction projects in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip need the approval of the defence minister.

Palestinian officials expressed concern about

Arens' plans.

"By the time we reach the elections, there will no longer be a peace process since the issue of the settlements is the most charged issue," said Nabil Amr, an advisor to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

The Palestinians hope to establish an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza, and fear their chances become more remote with each house being built in the 144 Jewish settlements scattered throughout the disputed lands.

The United States has urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to freeze construction in the settlements, but to no avail.

Netanyahu says he only builds enough to accommo-

date natural growth, but Palestinians say settlement construction is part of a land grab.

Eli Cohen, an advisor to Arens on settlement affairs, told Israel Radio that the elections were of concern to the ministry and the settlers.

"The defence ministry intends to strengthen the settlements... as soon as possible, as much as possible, before May 17," Cohen said.

Cohen noted that after the dovish Labour Party came to power in 1992, it imposed restrictions on settlement constructions in hopes of paving the way for peace talks with the Palestinians.



An Iranian soldier watches a public television broadcast of the late Islamic revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini, filmed aboard the flight which brought Khomeini back to Iran in 1979 after years of living in exile in France. Iran launched Feb. 1 ten days of celebrations to mark the Islamic revolution's 20th anniversary (AFP photo).

Israel denies passing U.S. defence secrets to China

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel flatly denied on Wednesday U.S. press reports that it had given China secrets concerning U.S. anti-missile laser weapons.

The defence ministry, in a strongly worded statement, said the report which appeared last week in the Washington Times newspaper that Israel had given the Chinese secrets concerning the Nautilus laser system was "unfounded."

"Israel has never shared with foreign factors any restricted American technology obtained during a joint U.S.-Israeli effort to build a battlefield laser gun," the ministry said.

The ministry said the Washington Times article "apparently bases itself on

sources of the U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency" (DIA) and calls on the sources mentioned in the article "to find a way to publicly deny the accusations attributed to them."

Israel and the United States have been jointly developing the Nautilus laser gun for several years and the first of the weapons is expected to be deployed in Israel later this year.

Israel wants to use the laser to shoot down Katyushas — short range rockets used by guerrillas in neighbouring Lebanon to attack Israeli forces occupying the south of that country and communities in northern Israel.

The Washington Times reported that U.S. techni-

cians working on the project at the state defense firm Israel Aircraft Industries saw Chinese weapons experts working at the same plant in mid-1997 and reported this to the DIA.

Later a Chinese scientist reportedly revealed details of the Nautilus technology at an international symposium, raising DIA suspicions that Israel had leaked information to China, it said.

Meanwhile the Israeli newspaper Haaretz unveiled details Wednesday of the first China-Israel arms deals carried out secretly beginning in 1979.

According to the newspaper, then-prime minister Menachem Begin turned to an Israeli billionaire with

close trade ties to China, Shaul Eisenberg, to serve as middleman in the secret sale of massive amounts of weapons technology to Beijing.

A first delegation of Israeli defence experts flew to China in February 1979 for talks which led to the bilateral arms programme carried out under the code-name Olympia.

The sales concerned primarily the upgrading of Soviet weaponry — a field in which Israel excelled as it sought to counter Soviet-armed Arab armies.

Haaretz said Eisenberg made commissions of \$500 million on Israel's arms sales to China during the first half of the 1980s.

'American pilots scared'

BAGHDAD (AP) — American pilots patrolling the "no fly" zones are scared of a direct confrontation with Iraqi defences, the commander of Iraq's air defences says.

"The United States might have a superior air force, but the American pilot is scared and he chickens out once he is inside Iraqi airspace," Gen. Shahin Al Tikriti told Al Thawra, the ruling Baath Party newspaper, in an interview published Wednesday.

"He always tries to avoid confrontation with air defenses by dropping his load far from the target and escaping," he said.

Iraq has been challenging U.S. and British enforcement of "no-fly" zones, particularly over the past month, by firing surface-to-air missiles at U.S. and British aircraft.

U.S. warplanes patrolling

the zones in northern and southern Iraq have fired on Iraqi air defense sites, although it is unclear the extent of damage they have inflicted. No planes have been hit.

The two zones were imposed by the Western allies after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south against possible attack by the Iraqi army.

Al Tikriti reiterated Iraq's rejection of the zones, which Iraq says violate its sovereignty and have no international standing. "These lines do not exist. They are a mirage," said the general, a native of President Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

On Monday, Saddam offered a reward of \$14,000 for any Iraqi who shoots down an American plane.

Russia, Kurd officials mute on Ocalan

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia and Kurdish officials in Moscow were mute on Wednesday over Turkish reports that fugitive Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan had again entered federation territory.

"We have no information about him staying in Moscow," a spokesman for the foreign ministry here told AFP. The Kremlin also refused to comment on the whereabouts of the wanted Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) leader.

The semi-official Anatolia news agency reported from Moscow on Tuesday that

Ocalan had arrived back to Russia after failing to find a country willing to accept him following his flight from Italy on Jan. 16.

Nadezhda Spiridonova, the Moscow-based spokeswoman for the Kurdish National Liberation Front in the former Soviet Union, dismissed the report.

"The [latest] version is that Ocalan is in the Russian capital, but there are also reports of his arrival in Armenia, Belarus, Libya, South Africa, Estonia, Greece, China, Cyprus and Scandinavia," she told the Interfax news agency.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkish troops kill 11 Kurds

DIYARBAKIR (AP) — Troops killed 11 Kurdish rebels in clashes in southeastern Turkey, authorities said Wednesday. The fighting took place in the province of Hakkari, where the borders of Turkey, Iraq and Iran meet. Rebels of the Kurdistan Labour Party, or PKK, frequently carry out cross-border operations from Iran or northern Iraq in their battle for autonomy in southeast Turkey. Authorities did not say when the clashes occurred.

Iraqi official in Cairo for talks with Abdul Meguid

CAIRO (AFP) — A senior Iraqi government official arrived here Wednesday for talks with Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid on ways of improving ties between Iraq and the pan-Arab organisation. Nabil Najm, an undersecretary of state at the Iraqi foreign ministry, is carrying a response from the Iraqi leadership to a message Abdul Meguid sent Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, a League spokesman said.

Habash to visit Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) leader George Habash will visit Egypt later this month for the first time since relations between Cairo and the radical group broke down 30 years ago, it was reported Wednesday. The 74-year-old Habash will take part in a Feb. 21-23 conference here entitled "Zionism and Arab Resistance," said Helmi Shaarawi, director of the non-governmental Arab Research Center which is organising the seminar. The PFLP leader's last visit to Egypt was in 1969, one year before relations between Egypt and the Palestinian organisation were severed after Egyptian authorities arrested 140 militants from the PFLP and its rival Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

Taleban, U.S. hold rare meeting

ISLAMABAD (AP) — A rare meeting between Afghanistan's Taleban religious army and senior U.S. officials was being held in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad Wednesday. Neither the Taleban nor the Americans would say what was on the table, but it appeared likely that Saudi dissident and U.S. enemy No. 1, Osama Ben Laden, would top the agenda.

'Egyptians will never forgive me' if I visit Israel

CAIRO (AFP) — The Egyptian prime minister "will never forgive me" if I visit Israel while holding Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's head, President Hosni Mubarak said in published statements Wednesday. Mubarak made the remarks Tuesday in a meeting with Jewish community leaders in Paris in reply to a question on why he did not visit Israel, the Cairo government press reported. "Today, if I travel to Israel my people will never forgive me because of the presence of someone like Netanyahu," Mubarak reportedly said.

WFP in nutrition appeal for Iraqi children

ROME (R) — The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) on Wednesday appealed to the international community to donate \$21 million to help Iraqis, many of them children, suffering from food shortages and poor water supply. About one million people are in need, including 200,000 acutely malnourished children, the Rome-based WFP said in a statement.

Iran draws 'red line' at negotiations with U.S.

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran draws a "red line" at negotiations with the United States which is just as clear cut as the bar on relations with Israel, the foreign ministry said here Wednesday. "This red line is clear: no relations with the Zionist regime [Israel] and no dialogue with the United States," ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said. Iran "considers the Zionist regime as illegitimate and rules out any negotiations with the United States because of their hostile attitude," he told the official IRNA news agency.

Kuwaiti shopping festival starts

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait's first shopping festival got underway on Wednesday after a last-minute attempt by MPs to ban concerts during the extravaganza was rebuffed by the government. The government postponed an urgent motion submitted Tuesday by a group of 33 MPs, led by house speaker Ahmad Al Saadoun, to cancel six concerts to be staged during the three-week-long "Hala February 99" festival.

Hundreds demonstrate to support Hamas

NABLUS (AFP) — Hundreds of Palestinians took to the streets of Nablus Wednesday to call for the release of 50 members of the Islamic group Hamas on hunger strike in the West Bank city's prison, witnesses said.

The prisoners, nearly all of them members of Hamas or the smaller Islamic Jihad group, have been on hunger-strike for 12 days in the Jneid prison to protest their continued detention without trial, in some cases for up to a year.

Their supporters, mostly wives and children of the detainees, carried banners reading "Political detention is a betrayal of the Palestinian people" and "Close the prisoners' file" during Wednesday's protest, the witnesses said.

A flyer distributed by Hamas during the demonstration said that a joint delegation from the Palestinian National Authority and the Palestinian legislature had visited the hunger-strikers.

The delegation asked the hunger-strikers to call off

their protest and instead "to start a dialogue with the authority on the releases of political prisoners."

But the flyer said that the prisoners "had unanimously professed their determination to continue the strike until the dark file of political detentions is finally closed."

The PNA is estimated to be holding around 170 political prisoners without trial after releasing several dozen Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists to mark the religious festival of 'Eid Al

Fitr last month.

The most recent wave of arrests by the authority followed two suicide bomb attacks in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip soon after the signing of the U.S.-brokered Wye River land-for-security agreement with Israel in October.

Hamas's spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, himself started a hunger-strike on Monday in Gaza to show his solidarity with the Jneid protesters.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

Thursday Programmes

16:10 Cartoon — Ace Venture

16:30 Doc. — The Science Show

17:00 French Programme

18:15 Sparks

19:00 Le Journal

19:15 French Programme

19:30 News Headlines

19:35 Comedy — Family Matters

20:00 Museums of the World

20:30 Drama — Dr. Quinn the

Medicine Woman

21:15 Oprah Winfrey Show

22:00 News in English

22:30 Feature Film — "Sketch

Arab"

23:59 End of T.X.

Friday Programmes

16:10 Cartoon — Animated Classics

16:30 Sinbad

17:00 French programme

18:30 The Simpsons

19:00 Le Journal

19:15 French Programme

19:30 News Headlines

19:35 The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air

20:00 Cinema, Cinema

20:30 Star Trek

21:15 Doc. — Full Circle

22:00 News in English

22:30 Drama — Millennium

23:10 Feature Film — "Man-

hattan Moonshine"

23:59 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

05:05 Fajr

06:24 Sunrise/Duha

11:49 Dhuh

14:49 Ashr

17:15 Maghreb

18:34 Isha

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers. Temperatures are expected to drop and winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be rainy and cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman 05/13
Aqaba 12/21
Deserts 04/16
Jordan Valley 09/20

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 17, Aqaba 22
Humidity readings: Amman
59 per cent, Aqaba 68 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 04/10
Jerash 05/14
Um Qays 06/15
Madaba 04/13
Petra 04/14
Dead Sea 10/21

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tashug 4757253

Dr. Bahjat Bader 5332642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 5350432
Dr. Wasfi Qudus 4893542

AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy 5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5337004
Ruka Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:
Dr. Issam Al Sani 021246858
Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)275360

ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan (09)3851743
Palestine Pharmacy (09)983562

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 4621111 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343402
Traffic office 4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio Jordan 4774111

Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic, Abdi 56661317
Husseini Medical Centre 5858656
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 46428116
Al-Khid Maternity 46424412
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5607431
Jordan Hospital 5607550
University Hospital 5333444
Al-Muasher Hospital 56672279
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4771013
Al-Bashir 4775111/26
Army, Marka 4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5157100
Anat Hospital 5607555
Al Anfal Cancer Centre 5353000

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 109990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Roman Catholic Hospital (02)727275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)7101372, (02)7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:15 Sanaa (RJ)
08:50 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:30 Bombay (RJ)
09:30 New Delhi (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
10:30 Colombo (RJ)
17:20 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
17:50 London, Athens (RJ)
18:05 Kuwait (RJ)
19:00 Al 'Ain (add) (RJ)
19:05 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
22:50 Lamaca (RJ)
00:15 Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
13:15 Riyadh (SV)

10:27/102831, (02)7102011
Specialty Hospital (02)7103100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)2014111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 44-53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

14:05 Rome (AZ)
14:10 Shanghai (AH)
14:45 Doha (QR)
15:55 Dubai (EK)
17:25 Muscat, Dubai (GF)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
19:05 Paris (AF)
20:25 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
23:10 Istanbul (TK)
00:25 Moscow (SU)
01:15 Amsterdam (KL)
04:10 London (BA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
For Thursday
08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QALIA) (RW)
09:35 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
23:15 Tel Aviv (arriving at QALIA) (RW)

For Friday
08:50 Aqaba (arriving at QALIA) (RW)
09:35 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
17:30 Gaza (arriving at QALIA) (RW)
18:40 Tel Aviv (arriving at QALIA) (RW)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:30 Beirut (RJ)
10:30 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:15 Shannon, Chicago (RJ)
11:45 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)

Other Flights
13:15 Riyadh (SV)

11:45 Al 'Ain (add) (RJ)
12:05 Kuwait (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:15 Athens, Paris (RJ)
19:35 Lamaca (RJ)
20:10 Riyadh (SV)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
22:00 Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
00:10 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)
05:00 Rome, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights
06:35 Damascus, London (BA)
07:10 Frankfurt (LH)
14:45 Riyadh (SV)
15:00 Annabah, Algiers (AF)
15:30 Rome (AZ)
15:35 Doha (QR)
17:00 Damascus, Dubai (EK)
18:15 Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)
20:00 Beirut (ME)
21:10 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 Cairo (MS)
01:55 Moscow (SU)
02:15 Amsterdam (KL)
04:45 Alexandria (BA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
For Thursday
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
19:45 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:15 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)
21:00 Tel Aviv (from QALIA) (RW)

For Friday
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
13:30 Gaza (from Marka Airport) (RW)
16:15 Tel Aviv (from QALIA) (RW)
20:30 Aqaba (from QALIA) (RW)

For Friday
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
13:30 Gaza (from Marka Airport) (RW)
16:15 Tel Aviv (from QALIA) (RW)
20:30 Aqaba (from QALIA) (RW)

For Friday
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
13:30 Gaza (from Marka Airport) (RW)
16:15 Tel Aviv (from QALIA) (RW)
20:30 Aqaba (from QALIA) (RW)

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The water

Films

By Francesca Ciriaci
AMMAN — Protesters appear to be leading to time... to see... and... of HSH France... who was appointed... only...
Moulin, Baghdad, a key... of the regime... many... in the past... the Islamic Action Front... were among hundreds... who blocked... to... the... and to... to the...
Like the IAF, most of the... 20 political parties... hope that... might give a badly needed

Politician

Kuwait, Saudi Arabia planning to offer Jordan cheap oil

AMMAN (AFP) — Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are planning to provide Jordan with oil at a reduced price, a top Jordanian official told AFP Wednesday.

The move is "a sign of a new era of cooperation between Jordan and the two Gulf states," said the official who asked not to be named.

Jordan's Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Al Khatib is due in Kuwait on Saturday for

an official visit during which an announcement is expected on the reopening of Jordan's embassy there after eight years.

"Providing Jordan with oil will also be discussed during the visit," the official said.

A stream of Gulf officials have visited Amman to congratulate Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein since his appointment as heir to the Throne on Janu-

ary 25. Prince Abdullah's meetings with Gulf dignitaries allowed the Crown Prince, who has strong ties with the Gulf royal families, to "examine ways of developing bilateral cooperation in all fields," the Jordanian official said.

Saudi Arabia stopped exporting oil to Jordan in 1990 after Amman was seen to be supporting Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait.

Before that, Amman had received 10 per cent of its oil requirements from the Saudi oil company Tapline, the rest coming from Iraq.

Since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis the U.N. sanctions committee has allowed Jordan to import all of its oil — 90,000 barrels a day — overland by truck from Iraq.



Jordanian kids enjoy soccer in front of the Qala Roman ruins downtown Amman, Wednesday, Feb. 3rd, 1999. Life in Jordan has continued normally despite King Hussein undergoing bone marrow transplant at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, in the United States. (AP Photo/Laurent Rebours)

The water pipe: Fun but deadly

By Susan Resheq

AMMAN — Over the past few years, Jordanians have picked up arjeelah (water pipe) smoking as a pastime, showing a preference for what they perceive as "traditional" way of smoking and a less threatening habit than that of cigarette smoking.

The tradition of the water pipe has its roots in Turkey. It made its Arab World debut in the souks of Cairo and Damascus, then spread to Jordan and the Gulf.

Reem Saheer, a young girl, says that she smokes the water pipe to fill an emotional gap in her life.

"My father left us ten years ago to work in a Gulf country and he rarely comes to visit us," she says. "This left a big gap in our family's life, which my mother has tried to bridge, with no success. So, I tried to forget my sadness by smoking arjeelah in my spare time."

Others say that smoking the flavoured water pipe has become the centre-piece of social gatherings with friends.

"It has a different taste," says Aymun Sbarabati, 25,

sitting with his friends in one of Amman's coffee shops. "We enjoy it more."

Nancy Ahmad, 29, adds that she was curious to try the pipe as most of her friends were arjeelah fans.

"Some of my friends encouraged me to try it, saying that it is less dangerous than cigarettes," she explains. "But actually I know that smoking the water pipe is more dangerous than smoking cigarettes."

"I believe that we live one life, whatever we do, so why not enjoy it the way we want?" she added.

Nadia Lutfy, an employee at a company in Amman, quips that her husband is responsible for her addiction to the "hookah."

"In the past, he used to go out with friends to smoke the water pipe and leave me at home alone, so I asked a friend who was going to Egypt to buy me an expensive and luxurious water pipe," she recounts. "After that, I started preparing the water pipe at home and smoke it with my husband."

However, Muath Ozaizi, a doctor at one of the country's state run hospi-

tals in Amman, says that he fears arjeelah smoking is on the rise because of a common perception among people that the "traditional way of smoking tobacco derivatives is less dangerous than smoking cigarettes."

"I believe that we live one life, whatever we do, so why not enjoy it the way we want?"

"As a result, some people quit smoking cigarettes and switched to water pipe," he says.

"But the method of burning the tobacco and the continuity of the flame above the reddish-ashy coal renders a large amount of smoke containing an abundant quantity of carbon monoxide, a leading killer agent," says Ozaizi. "The carbon monoxide emitted from the hookah is five times higher than that from cigarettes," he adds. "Carbon monoxide,

nicotine and tar in water pipes are well proven to be the major cause of complicated diseases, like myocardial infarction (M.I.), cerebrovascular accidents, cancer, early death and also decreases lipids," Ozaizi told the Jordan Times.

"Recently, it was proved that nicotine is an addictive material that increases blood pressure and causes the M.I.," says Ramzi Mazawi, member of the Jordan Medical Association.

"Most of the people think that nicotine of the arjeelah is dissolved and reduced by water," Ozaizi says. "These deadly materials will not be reduced or dissolved by passing through water."

"All scientific experiments emphasise that tobacco is a slow killer, and with added materials in [water pipe tobacco], like the 'muasel' (a mixture of tobacco, honey and chemical additives) it becomes an even faster killer," Ozaizi warns.

Parliament urges government to aid farmers during drought

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Parliamentarians on Wednesday urged the government to intensify efforts to help farmers already facing difficulties as a result of this year's drought due to the low amount of rainfall this winter.

Deputy Ghazi Al Fayez suggested that the government reactivate the Range Land Agreement, signed between Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which allows Jordanian livestock to breed in Saudi territories.

The agreement, signed in 1979, stipulates that livestock breeders from both sides would be granted "special permission" to travel freely between the two countries' territories.

Fayez called upon the government to make fodder available to livestock breeders at reasonable prices and to extend soft loans to buy these items.

In December, the govern-

ment declared a state of drought and said it would resort to certain measures to minimise the impact of the drought on livestock breeders and farmers.

"The government should act immediately to avoid the death of livestock, a matter of concern to many sectors in the country," Fayez told his colleagues during the session.

The deputy also urged the government to offer farmers vaccines to treat animals suffering from "foot-and-mouth disease" which destroys cattle herds and causes huge financial losses.

"The farmers are confused because of drought, high fodder prices, and a lack of veterinary vaccines," Fayez said.

Deputy Khalid Tarawneh asked the government to approach donor countries for financial assistance to cope with the drought.

Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Kreishah told lawmakers that the government

has undertaken certain measures to face the drought and to extend help for farmers and livestock breeders.

Kreishah said that among the measures his ministry adopted was a subsidies allocation to farmers and livestock breeders and an allocation of JD12 million in soft loans to those affected by the drought.

The minister said another JD500,000 were allocated to purchase vaccination from Turkey and France to fight the disease. More than 1,000,000 vaccination doses are expected to reach the Kingdom in the coming two days.

Kreishah said the government had already decided to open the rangeland reserves to farmers to allow their livestock to breed in these places.

Meanwhile, Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi urged Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Fayez Tarawneh to allow farmers who cultivate along the River Jordan to spend longer hours in their

fields. Farmers near the river are forced to vacate their farms before the sunset and not allowed to enter their farms in early morning hours.

"With these conditions, farmers do not have time to take care of their lands," Abbadi told Parliament.

Deputy Mijhim Sqour said he received a petition from 40 farmers in Northern Shouneh who complained that their lands were "taken" from them and allocated to "influential people."

"These people are upset because their lands were confiscated and they have been denied their rights," the deputy said.

"We urge the government to launch an investigation of those responsible for this problem," Sqour said, claiming that some people had been imprisoned for protesting this matter.

Drivers urge cancellation of traffic law

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Around 500 drivers sent a petition to HRH Crown Prince Abdullah urging him to cancel the newly implemented traffic law which they say is unfair and has caused scores of them to lose their jobs.

"I was twice fired from my job due to the law because my licence was suspended for two months," said Ahmad Mahmoud Salameh, a bus driver and a father of nine.

The new system, implemented in April 1998, is designed to help authorities take action against repeat traffic offenders by recording points for every major violation by both Jordanian and foreign drivers holding a valid Jordanian licence. A driver that accumulates 12 points has his or her licence revoked for two months.

"At a time when the govern-

ment fights unemployment and poverty, we join our children, unable to support them, barley making ends meet with 14 hours daily work," said the drivers in their letters to the Crown Prince.

"Driving is the only profession we have and if we lose our licences this would mean we cannot feed our children," they added.

Drivers also complain that the implementation of the law is dependent on "moody" traffic officers.

The 500 drivers claim they have no knowledge in the one year old law, and that they do not have a union to protect them or voice their concerns through the appropriate channels.

"We spend most of our day working, cut off from the rest of the world, which leads us to a state of ignorance of the new law,"

Police officials said the Traffic Department published the law on the television and radio and in newspapers months before implementing it to avoid any misunderstandings of the rules of the new law.

"The Traffic Department is ready at any time to publish the new law to raise people's awareness of it," said Adnan Shamaleh, director of the Traffic Department.

One bus driver, working on the much travelled Amman-Sweileh route, criticised the 500 drivers for demanding the cancellation of the law "just because they do not know about it."

"The law was put to save our lives from busy drivers and should not be changed," said the driver Mustafa Abu Meshrif.

Other regulations stipulate that upon a driver's first violation, a file will be opened. After

accumulating 11 points, he or she must attend a "drivers' rehabilitation" course at a state-sponsored driving school.

Violations are worth one to four points, and include driving without a licence or under the influence of alcohol or drugs; failure to stop at red lights; failure to report to the nearest police station in the event of an accident that leads to injury; using a forged licence plate, and violating one-way street rules.

The annual number of traffic accidents in Jordan is among the highest in the world, and increases by an annual average of 10 per cent each year. Recent statistics released by the Traffic Department indicate that around 500 people were killed or seriously injured in Jordan in 1997 as a result of a road accident.

Agricultural engineers press for more allowances

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Several thousand agricultural engineers on Tuesday organised a one-hour sit-in in front of the Union of Professional Associations headquarters, calling on the government to amend their allowances, as it did last year for medical professionals.

Some engineers carried banners urging the government to honour its commitment to raise their salaries by 120 per cent, instead of 90 per cent, over the basic salary; a commitment the association's officials say was reiterated many times last year.

In a gesture of good will,

some participants distributed flowers to policemen who flocked to the scene to prevent the engineers from marching towards the Prime Ministry at the Fourth Circle.

No physical confrontations were reported to have occurred between the riot police who, armed with batons, surrounded the crowd.

Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh gave the green light for the raise, but the government never issued a decision to raise allowances," said Hassan Jaber, president of the association.

Jaber said the association was forced to protest after losing

trust in the government and its intention to remedy their situation.

Participants said they were angered by the government's determination not to grant the engineers the raise and criticised the Cabinet for a "policy of procrastination."

"Whenever we refer to the government, they give us sweet talk but nothing happens," said Amjad Abu Zreig, who participated in the protest. "They have to realise that we are serious and will continue our campaign until the government gives us what we want."

"Holding a march is not a violation of the law or the Con-

stitution, and organising peaceful protest is a form of democracy," said Abu Zreig.

The engineer's decision to protest came during a meeting of the general assembly who unanimously agreed to hold the sit-in.

Participants also agreed to organise another sit-in in front of the Prime Ministry.

The government last December granted doctors and pharmacists working for the public sector a 120 per cent raise over their basic salaries after repeated demands.

Phosphate company to build housing estate in Ma'an

AMMAN (Petra) — Information Minister Naser Judeh Tuesday said the government has assigned the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) to prepare an overall plan for a housing estate to be built in Ma'an to accommodate families of workers in the Shidiyah Phosphates Mines.

Judeh made the statement after a Cabinet session Tuesday, which was chaired by HRH Crown Prince Abdullah for the

first time since his designation as heir to the Throne.

The Cabinet discussed progress in constructing a housing estate for families of workers of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC).

Judeh said the estate will be built on 500 dunams in Ma'an close to the industrial estate. He added that the first phase of the project includes the construction

of 740 housing units at an estimated cost of JD25 million, while the second phase includes the construction of 340 units at an estimated cost of JD14 million. The plan includes schools and other facilities.

Judeh expects the overall plan to be ready within 30 days. The JPMC is currently coordinating with financiers to secure the funds necessary to carry out the first phase.

Politicians take agenda of political reform to Crown Prince Abdullah

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — Politicians appear to be wasting no time to impress their desire to see greater political and democratic reforms on HRH Prince Abdullah, the Regent, who was appointed Crown Prince only 10 days ago.

Leaders of the influential Muslim Brotherhood, a key ally of the regime on many occasions in the past four decades, and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), were among hundreds of politicians who flocked to Raghdan Palace last Thursday to congratulate Prince Abdullah on his appointment and to pledge allegiance to the Hashemite Throne.

Like the IAF, most of the country's 20 political parties hope that Prince Abdullah might give a badly-needed

push to the country's musty political system and ease dormant tensions between the opposition and the government.

"This is a chance to turn a new page," said IAF Secretary General Abdul Latif Arabiyat. "We need to shape our policies with clear objectives, to show the people that we are doing something new in the economy, at the social level, and politically."

Echoing many others' views, Arabiyat was quick to call for early elections, but the Muslim Brotherhood, moved swiftly to rectify such a proposal.

"We oppose early elections before a new, modern and democratic elections law is endorsed," said Abdul Majed Thneibat, the Brotherhood's overall leader.

Like fire under the ashes, the

debate over the controversial elections law — one reason for the historic decision by the Islamic-led opposition to boycott the November 1997 polls — was reignited.

But while columnists debated the viability of holding general polls ahead of 2001, when the four-year term of the 13th Parliament ends, deputies dismissed talks of early elections as "unfounded rumours."

"There is no need for early elections," said Deputy Mahmoud Kharabsheh, head of the Legal Affairs and National Guidance committees in the Lower House.

"This council was elected by the people, and dissolving it would mean invalidating the last elections and punishing those who participated," he told the Jordan Times.

Nine opposition parties, the Muslim Brotherhood, a list of

more than 80 prominent personalities, as well as the 80,000-strong Union of the Professional Associations, boycotted the 1997 polls, which were also marred by widespread allegations of vote rigging and government interference.

"Those who boycotted the elections, and now find themselves out of the political scene, are spreading this rumour on early elections," Kharabsheh said.

However, all political forces, in and out of Parliament, from the right wing to the left, are united in their call for a new elections law as a starting point for a comprehensive review of the country's smoldering democratic march.

The rightist National Constitutional Party, headed by Lower House Speaker Abdul Hadi Majali, has recently

joined forces with the former communists of the Democratic Party of the Left to back a proposal that envisages the allocation of a percentage of parliamentary seats to political parties.

But the proposal has infuriated some opposition circles.

"Minority seats have already proved to be a tool in the government's hands to infiltrate Parliament," charged Circassian Toujan Feisal, the highest-profile loser of the last elections.

"Allocating seats to political parties would enable politicians of the old-guard, allied with the regime, to make their comeback through the service door," she told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

However, Feisal said, "this Parliament is forged and too weak to serve full term, therefore we expect early elec-

tions." According to her, "early elections will be one of the means the government will use to absorb the great changes going on at home and in the area, especially in terms of relations with Israel, the West and Americans, as well as the strain in relations with Iraq and Syria."

Amid intensified calls for political reforms, some are asking the new Crown Prince to convene a second national conference along the same guidelines as the conference which produced the 1992 National Charter.

In a letter to Prince Abdullah on Tuesday, a group of professionals and politicians said "times are mature for the convening of a national conference to reactivate the Constitution and launch a national dialogue."

The petition, signed by 11 between lawyers, engineers, and physicians, and championed by former minister and veteran Ba'athist Jamal Shaer, said the proposed national conference should meet three requirements. It must be truly representative of all sectors of society; take place in an extraordinary situation such as that characterising the convening of the 1992 Madrid Peace Conference; and be convened by the King or his deputy.

Issues to be addressed by such conference should include the country's democratic march, inter-Arab relations, the press and elections laws, as well as unemployment, corruption, and poverty, "in order to establish Arab economic complementarity."

As for relations with Israel, the signatories proposed that they be conditioned on Israeli

policies towards Arabs and Palestinians, namely the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Analysts said the fact that political circles have stepped up their hopes for reforms and multiplied their proposals will have a positive impact of Jordan's liberalisation and will help strengthen the institutions.

"Prince Abdullah is a new player in the internal political scene, although he has long operated behind the scene on the international level," said one Western diplomat.

"On one hand, everybody wants to impress him and win him over to their ideas. On the other, he also wants to listen and understand everybody."

DILI, Indonesia (AP) — About 200 separatists rallied Wednesday in East Timor as the Indonesian government said pro-independence groups were behind recent unrest in the troubled territory.

Buoyed by a surprise offer from Indonesia to consider independence for the former Portuguese colony, the chanting protesters demanded the Indonesian military withdraw troops at once.

For the third consecutive day, they gathered at Santa Cruz cemetery in East Timor's seaside capital of Dili, where Indonesian troops fired on separatists in 1991. Dozens were killed.

Indonesian officials have said the Southeast Asian nation's highest legislative body may discuss independence for East Timor if its people reject an autonomy proposal from Jakarta.

There has also been progress in U.N.-sponsored talks between Indonesia and Portugal, which the United Nations still considers the administering power in East Timor.

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 and annexed it a year later, unleashing separatist rebel fighting and human rights abuses.

Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said anti-Indonesian East Timorese who have demanded a referendum on independence were largely responsible for recent violence in the troubled half-island territory.

"It is the pro-referendum groups that have been very active and sometimes very aggressive in the last few weeks," Alatas told Associated Press Television News. "We are trying to keep the situation under control."

Hundreds of villagers were sheltering in Suai, 80 kilometres southwest of Dili, after violence and threats between pro- and anti-independence groups.

Another 200 refugees who said they had been harassed by pro-Indonesian gunmen were staying at the home of a pro-independence leader in Dili.

Alatas denied accusations by pro-independence activists that the military had systematically armed East Timorese civilians who want their homeland to stay part of Indonesia.

Chinese troops clear mines from Vietnam border

BEIJING (R) — Chinese troops have cleared more than 280,000 landmines and unexploded bombs from the Sino-Vietnamese border in a seven-month operation to boost trade between the two former enemies, state media said Wednesday.

The Guangzhou Daily said the operation had opened up 25 km of border roads and two border crossings and was conducted without serious injury.

"The success of the Yunnan operation has caught the attention of world minesweeping experts," the paper said.

China's southwestern province of Yunnan borders Vietnam.

It said the rate of clearance was among the world's fastest.

The operation, conducted by 510 elite troops using advanced minesweeping equipment, was the second large-scale clearing on the border since 1994.

At least 800,000 mines were laid in Yunnan in a bloody border conflict between China and Vietnam in 1979, Beijing had wanted to punish Hanoi for its invasion of Cambodia a few months earlier.

Minesweepers were aided by advanced technology, including anti-landmine boots developed by the Chinese military.

"One soldier stepped on 72 mines but because of the boots, only suffered minor injuries to his toes and the skin on his feet," the paper said.

"He was treated and back with his unit in no time." The success of the operation has caught the attention of the United Nations, which is considering using Chinese minesweeping expertise in its clearing efforts abroad, the paper said.

There are an estimated 100 million landmines buried or hidden in 64 countries around the world. Some 25,000 people a year are killed or maimed by mines left when wars end.

China under fire for being soft on sea pirates

SINGAPORE (AP) — A high-ranking official of an international maritime organisation Wednesday accused Chinn of abetting piracy and making Asian waters a nightmare for ship owners and crews.

"China is the one country that lets the pirates go," Jayant Abhyankar, deputy director of the London-based International Maritime Bureau, told The Associated Press.

"We see that in almost every case we see in China," he said, adding that this presents a "very serious problem in fighting international piracy."

Abhyankar will address the issue during a three-day workshop in Singapore this week on fighting piracy.

Sponsored by the International Maritime Organisation, the event will be attended by representatives from several Asian countries as well as by observers from other countries and delegates from international shipping organisations.

While the number of pirate attacks worldwide decreased in 1998, the South China Sea remains the riskiest area, said E.O. Agbakoba, head of the International Maritime Organisation's Maritime Safety Division.

All of the world's coastal countries — 156 of them — are members of the organisation, which sets strict guidelines to prevent piracy. But their efforts are increasingly undermined by China's lack of cooperation, Abhyankar said.

In his report, Abhyankar listed several incidents in recent years when pirates were released by authorities in China.

In 1997, the Chinese Public Security Bureau "simply sent home" 14 hijackers of the Cypriot vessel Anna Sierra, the report said. The Chinese claimed to have no jurisdiction over the matter, as the ship was hijacked off Thailand.

But the Chinese authorities also sold the ship's cargo and charged its owner \$400,000 to cover the cost of their inquiries, the report said.

"This condition was extraordinary in that no law enforcement agency makes a charge for its services," Abhyankar said, adding that the security bureau never disclosed the nature of their "inquiries." The losses suffered by the ship owner of Anna Sierra eventually ran into millions of dollars, he said.

The case of the Malaysian tanker Petro Ranger, hijacked in 1998 and found in Hainan Island in China, "was representative of the hijackings" last year, Abhyankar said.

Although the pirates, the ship and its cargo were found, the pirates were not prosecuted and were repatriated to Indonesia, their home country.

"Piracy cannot be resolved in this way," Abhyankar said.

"The incident will encourage the pirates to carry on," China responded Wednesday by calling the IAMB's allegations "groundless."

"The Chinese government has attached extreme importance to the problems of piracy and have done a lot of work on this issue in recent years," the Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement.

"We would like to cooperate with relevant countries and international organisations to continue attacking severely maritime crimes that threaten the safety of people and property."

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In his report, Abhyankar listed several incidents in recent years when pirates were released by authorities in China.

In 1997, the Chinese Public Security Bureau "simply sent home" 14 hijackers of the Cypriot vessel Anna Sierra, the report said. The Chinese claimed to have no jurisdiction over the matter, as the ship was hijacked off Thailand.

But the Chinese authorities also sold the ship's cargo and charged its owner \$400,000 to cover the cost of their inquiries, the report said.

"This condition was extraordinary in that no law enforcement agency makes a charge for its services," Abhyankar said, adding that the security bureau never disclosed the nature of their "inquiries." The losses suffered by the ship owner of Anna Sierra eventually ran into millions of dollars, he said.

The case of the Malaysian tanker Petro Ranger, hijacked in 1998 and found in Hainan Island in China, "was representative of the hijackings' last years," Abhyankar said.

Although the pirates, the ship and its cargo were found, the pirates were not prosecuted and were repatriated to Indonesia, their home country.

"Piracy cannot be resolved in this way," Abhyankar said.

"The incident will encourage the pirates to carry on," China responded Wednesday by calling the IXB's allegations "groundless."

"The Chinese government has attached extreme importance to the problems of piracy and have done a lot of work on this issue in recent years," the Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement.

"We would like to cooperate with relevant countries and international organisations to continue attacking severely maritime crimes that threaten the safety of people and property."



Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas shakes hands with former rebel leader Abilio Araújo (right) in Jakarta. Araújo said East Timor's best prospects were to remain part of Indonesia, but with more autonomy over its affairs. Indonesia last week abruptly reversed 23 years of staunch opposition to any suggestion of independence for the former Portuguese territory, saying it may consider letting the province go if Timorese rejected its offer of autonomy (Reuters photo)

He clarified that, in line with a nationwide law enforcement programme, civilian guards in East Timor had been handed weapons to reinforce the police.

"What is happening in East Timor is the training and selective arming of so-

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"One soldier stepped on 72 mines but because of the boots, only suffered minor injuries to his toes and the skin on his feet," the paper said.

"He was treated and back with his unit in no time." The success of the operation has caught the attention of the United Nations, which is considering using Chinese minesweeping expertise in its clearing efforts abroad, the paper said.

There are an estimated 100 million landmines buried or hidden in 64 countries around the world. Some 25,000 people a year are killed or maimed by mines left when wars end.

called village guards, or auxiliary guards," he said. "Groups continue to make attacks. The police need some reinforcement to ensure law and order." A delegation of pro-Indonesian East Timorese was expected to meet with government officials in

'ASEA to save

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan said Wednesday ASEAN would keep trying to save next month's ministerial meeting with the European Union which is threatened by a furious row over Myanmar.

The ASEAN-EU meeting in Berlin next month is in doubt as the EU has refused to relax a visa ban that would prevent Myanmar officials going to the talks.

Signs of a possible compromise have emerged in recent days however, with Myanmar saying it is willing to discuss any topic after Germany reportedly

Jakarta this week to argue against independence. East Timor was riven by internal conflict when Indonesia invaded East Timor after a hasty withdrawal by Portuguese colonisers, and fears abound that old antagonisms will fuel more vio-

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he told reporters before visiting France, Austria and Belgium.

"The idea is that it is likely we will have a meeting, we don't say we must have a meeting, just that we should have.

"We can brainstorm, it is possible (to break the deadlock)".

Surin said both sides had solved problems threatening their relationship in the past, for example over the former Portuguese enclave of East Timor annexed by Indonesia.

"When other problems happen, we have to talk, to ease the tension, we have to keep irving," Surin said.

"It is not a time to use confrontation, physical confrontation, because then it will show that we are not a mature society," said Abilio Araujo, a former separatist leader who met Alatas Wednesday.

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rights in Myanmar. "The reported recent softening of the EU's policy on Burma contrasts with the increasing severity of the junta's approach to the pro-democracy opposition in Burma," the front said in a statement.

"The EU should be mindful of the fact that all forms of human rights violations, including forced labour, relocation, extortion, confiscation of farming land, burning and looting of villages and extra-judicial killings in ethnic nationality areas have continued unabated," the students said.

The EU and the United

Myanmar's entry into ASEAN in 1997, saying the military government was guilty of major human rights violations and of suppressing the democracy movement of Aung San Suu Kyi.

S intensifies

NEWS IN BRIEF

Soldiers policing Russian nuclear warheads owed months of back-pay

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia's general in charge of maintaining the nation's stockpile of nuclear warheads conceded Wednesday that soldiers who police the top-secret sites are owed months of back pay. Their families meanwhile have not been paid social benefits for most of last year. "That is our main concern," General Igor Valykin told a press conference. "The person who works with nuclear weapons knows secrets and they know all the entrance ways." Valykin said Russian troops enlisted in the 12th division in charge of keeping and transporting nuclear weapons are owed wages for last August and September. Social benefits for their families who live primarily in isolated military sites in Russia's remote and Siberian regions have only been paid through 1997. The revelation underscores western fears that parts of Russia's massive nuclear stockpile may be sold off by embittered soldiers to rogue nations. Valykin's remarks came during a briefing in which he outlined the benefits of the U.S. Congress-funded Nunn-Lugar project that has paid tens of millions of dollars to keep Russia's nuclear stockpile safe.

Indian minorities watchdog blames government for violence

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's religious minorities watchdog criticised the government Wednesday for failing to heed warnings that could have prevented the spread of attacks on Christians in India. Tahir Mahmood, chairman of the National Commission for Minorities (NCMI), told the Press Trust of India the government's failure to act on NCM recommendations had contributed to the anti-Christian violence in the western state of Gujarat over Christmas. "Communal violence is a contagious disease and incidents (in) Gujarat should have been nipped in the bud," Mahmood said. "This would not have spread to other parts of the country if... fore-warnings on Gujarat were taken note of sincerely." Mahmood said that following a survey in Gujarat in August, his commission had warned "that the incidents could be reenacted elsewhere and suggested remedial steps." Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee toured the state after Christmas and gave the local government a clean bill. Vajpayee's BJP rules Gujarat, where the Christians had been targeted by radical Hindus for alleged forced conversions. Hindus form about 83 per cent of India's 975 million population. Muslims comprise 15 per cent, while Christians account for little more than two per cent. The recent violence culminated last month in the brutal murder of an Australian missionary and his two young sons in the eastern state of Orissa.

Pakistani judge dealing with love-match row hears father

LAHORE, Pakistan (AFP) — A Pakistani judge deciding the fate of a couple who married in defiance of parents on Wednesday heard the bride's father claim that the wedding was illegal, legal sources said. Humaira, 28, and her husband Mehmoed Butt attended the proceedings held by Lahore High Court judge Tasadduq Hussain in his chamber. They watched video film of a wedding presented by the bride's father Abbas Khokhar. Khokhar, a provincial assembly member and influential landlord, said the footage showed Humaira marrying a cousin before she eloped with Butt last year, the sources said. Humaira said the film was taken after she had secretly married Butt in Lahore and that her family forced her to cooperate in staging a fake marriage for the camera. The judge scheduled the next hearing for Monday. Police say they have received a complaint of kidnap against Butt, who was arrested along with Humaira at Karachi in southern Sindh province on Jan. 28 and brought to Lahore, the capital of central Punjab province. The couple told the judge Monday they were beaten while in custody following their arrest. Judge Hussain is hearing a petition filed by lawyer Hina Jilani on behalf of a Women's Action Forum, which is seeking protection for the couple against alleged harassment and a vendetta by the family. Monday the judge ordered police to free Butt but impounded his passport and told him to cooperate with police. Hussain sent Humaira to a home for distressed women run by human rights activists pending a verdict.

Mother of four sentenced to prison for stealing 20 cents

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP)—A Romanian woman was sentenced to 2 1/2 years prison after being convicted of stealing the equivalent of 20 cents to pay her bus fare home, a judge said Wednesday. Such heavy sentences for petty offences have drawn outrage in recent years, since judges have begun imposing longer sentences allowed by parliament for theft in 1996. Before then, maximum sentences were months, but now measure years. The defendant in the recent case, Adela Dirivan, told the court she stole 2,500 lei (20 cents) from a man's pocket in Bucharest last year because she couldn't afford bus fare to her rural southern hamlet, near Pitesti. The judge, who declined to give her name, characterised the 2 1/2-year sentence as lenient, saying she had taken into account the fact the woman has four children, the youngest of whom is 7 months old, and no criminal record. The law allows for a maximum sentence of 15 years. "Stealing is stealing and I gave her less than the recommended minimum sentence," the judge said. On the same day as Dirivan's sentencing last week, the same Bucharest court gave a 4-year sentence to a man convicted of stealing \$25,000 worth of cars, the daily *Libertatea* reported. Dirivan is free, pending an appeal.

British skier injured in avalanche released from hospital

PARIS (AP) — A British skier injured in an avalanche has been released from the hospital and British authorities Wednesday identified another skier killed in the same accident in the French Alps. Mark Wilson, 29, from Keighley in England, was killed Tuesday at the Val d'Isere ski resort when he was hit by the avalanche and confirmed Wednesday. The British consulate in Lyon Tuesday that the victim was a woman. Another British man, who was not identified, suffered from shock, but said. Police initially reported the Tuesday evening, police seriously injured. A third skier in the group suffered no injuries. There has been a heightened risk of avalanches in the French Alps for weeks. Sunday, a mountain climber and a snow boarder, both from Britain, died after accidents in the area. Another snow boarder was killed last Thursday in the Mont Blanc region.

'ASEAN trying hard to save EU meet'

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan said Wednesday ASEAN would keep trying to save next month's ministerial meeting with the European Union which is threatened by a furious row over Myanmar.

The ASEAN-EU meeting in Berlin next month is in doubt as the EU has refused to relax a visa ban that would prevent Myanmar officials going to the talks.

Signs of a possible compromise have emerged in recent days however, with Myanmar saying it is willing to discuss any topic after Germany reportedly hinted Yangon's foreign minister might be admitted if the junta's heavily criticised human rights record was discussed.

Surin said no decision had been made over the fate of the talks after the Myanmar row forced the cancellation of a ASEAN-EU Joint Cooperation Committee meeting here last month.

"We do not lose momentum. It can keep going on. We will talk with the EU," he told reporters before visiting France, Austria and Belgium.

"The idea is that it is likely we will have a meeting, we don't say we must have a meeting, just that we should have.

"We can brainstorm, it is possible (to break the deadlock)"

Surin said both sides had solved problems threatening their relationship in the past, for example over the former Portuguese enclave of East Timor annexed by Indonesia.

"When other problems happen, we have to talk, to ease the tension, we have to keep trying," Surin said.

Disagreements over Myanmar have soured relations between the EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in recent years.

Exiled Myanmar students on Wednesday urged Europe not to ease its hard line against the military government in Yangon.

The All Burma Students Democratic Front said the EU should not ignore what it said was the continuing deterioration of human rights in Myanmar.

"The reported recent softening of the EU's policy on Burma contrasts with the increasing severity of the junta's approach to the pro-democracy opposition in Burma," the front said in a statement.

"The EU should be mindful of the fact that all forms of human rights violations including forced labour, relocation, extortion, confiscation of farming land, burning and looting of villages and extra-judicial killings in ethnic nationalities areas have continued unabated," the students said.

The EU and the United States staunchly oppose Myanmar's entry into ASEAN in 1997, saying the military government was guilty of major human rights violations and of suppressing the democratic movement of Aung San Suu Kyi.

ASEAN argued political change in Myanmar was more likely to arise from constructive debate than the punitive sanctions favoured by the EU and the United States.

Diplomats seek truce as Guinea-Bissau fighting intensifies

LISBON (AP) — Foreign diplomats in Guinea-Bissau are trying to broker a cease-fire between loyalist troops and rebels engaged in fierce fighting for control of the capital of the small West African nation, its interim prime minister said Wednesday.

Francisco Fadul said in a telephone interview from Bissau that fighting intensified overnight between a breakaway military faction and the mostly Senegalese troops supporting President Joao Bernardo Vieira.

"There's a lot of automatic weapon fire and a lot of heavy shelling," Fadul said.

He said the foreign and defence ministers of Togo were due to arrive in Bissau Wednesday morning to try to negotiate a truce between the two sides.

Separate efforts at halting the fighting were being

of Portugal, France and Sweden, according to Fadul.

He declined to give further details, but the diplomats previously have said they are seeking to hold the foes to a November peace accord that had halted last year's five-month civil war in the former Portuguese colony.

At least 35 people have died and 220 have been wounded since the fighting flared Sunday in the West African nation, aid workers said.

Most of the country's 6,000-strong army have joined the rebellion aimed at deposing Vieira. The insurgents charge Vieira is corrupt.

Aid workers say that among the wounded so far were members of ECOMOG, the defence arm of the 16-member Economic Community of West African States.

There are 110 ECOMOG

Togo, in the country to oversee the peace accord and act as a buffer between the two sides. Hundreds more were due to arrive this week.

A ship carrying more than 200 refugees, including 95 children, which ran aground on a sand bank outside Bissau port was pulled free by another vessel Tuesday night, the Portuguese news agency Lusa reported.

The peace pact called for the withdrawal of foreign troops, a peacekeeping deployment, a government of national unity and general elections in March.

The rebellion, which first broke out last June, was triggered by the dismissal of rebel leader Brig. Ansumane Mane as top military commander for allegedly running guns to separatist fighters in Senegal. Mane denies the charge and alleges that Vieira was behind the

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Relatives

Shop, about 1200 people filled the church in the African street market. Most of the young relatives of the 100 prisoners who plunged to their deaths a year ago were in St. Martin's last Sunday night.

The pain that still went around the church that many people in our parish and the Rev. Roman Ciesinski said:

"It is not a natural death. It is a death against nature. It is a death that could have been avoided. Could it have been avoided, could it have been planned that day very few outside all rules of the prison said."

As many as 500 people jammed the Romanian Catholic church, many of whom were

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Arafat, Albright 'revolving door'

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The truth, what's that?

In October the Truth and Reconciliation Committee accused FW de Klerk of covering up state-orchestrated bombings of churches and the South African TUC. Now he's promoting his autobiography, in an effort to tell his side of the story.

By Gary Younge

THE RECENT HISTORY of South Africa according to FW de Klerk goes something like this: A white minority government, ruled by a series of benevolent dictators, was keen to devolve power to the black majority as equal partners. Some white extremists meted out a degree of racial injustice and neither the blacks nor the rest of the international community were interested in the deal. So the white rulers decided the most reasonable and fair thing to do was give up their power and hand it over to people they had previously seen fit to put in prison. They were led by Nelson Mandela, or other — a nice chap, although he could get uppity on occasions and proved something of a disappointment to those keen on establishing a democratic, non-racial country.

"When we handed over power in 1994 there was not one discrimination law on the statute book," says De Klerk, a heavy smoker with a warm manner and deeply furrowed brow. "In that sense the National Party abolished apartheid, not the new government." The man who insisted that South Africa could not "tamper with the policy of separate development but must abandon it completely," is now tinkering with history.

He is no longer the politician who was forced to end illegitimate white rule because of mass protest and international condemnation but, according to the Sunday Telegraph,

"the man who legislated himself out of power"; no longer history's receptacle but its master.

"We started the process in 1986 under PW Botha," he says, referring to the former president who declared the state of emergency in 1985 and who was deemed, in a report to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, to be accountable for 'gross violations of human rights' when he ran the country from 1978 to 1989.

"It was then we said: One united South Africa, one citizenship, one vote. There was a strong moral element in this," De Klerk says.

By the time he took over in 1989 things had changed. The Berlin Wall was coming down, Israelis and Palestinians were at the negotiating table and the world was waiting for events in South Africa to unravel and hoping not too much blood would be shed in the process. Whether De Klerk, now 60, did the right thing at the right time, or was simply in the right place at the right time, is a moot point.

"History did present me with an opportunity to move faster and take my constituency with me but we had to seize the opportunity." This is De Klerk's story and not only is he sticking to it, he is roaming the world actively promoting it in his autobiography, *The Last Trek, A New Beginning*.

Biographers were probably never going to be kind to De Klerk. True, he played a significant role in steering his country from pariah autocracy to a democracy embraced by the

international community. But there was also the sticky matter of the 17 years as a National Party MP, during which he rose through the party ranks while it committed some of the most unspeakable atrocities in recent times.

De Klerk does not so much have a skeleton in his closet as a whole coterie doing the can-can all around his bedroom. In October, the Truth and Reconciliation Committee accused him of covering up a state-orchestrated bombing of the South African Council of Churches in 1988 and the Congress of South African Trade Unions in 1987.

"The fact is, I didn't know," he says. "I didn't know because it was hidden from me, as it was hidden from other political decision-makers. And some of the heads of police and the defence forces, it was also hidden from them." If he truly wanted to secure a favourable place in history one wonders why he did not simply how out gracefully after he shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

"I felt a duty to stay on and finish what I had set out to do. I wanted to see the process through to its logical conclusion, not secure my place in history." The tone of the book suggests that he realised that if he was going to be sure of a good write-up he would have to do it himself. When he abandoned politics in August 1997, the former National Party leader said he was retiring to pen a work which would place events in South Africa "in their correct per-

'The man who insisted that South Africa could not tamper with the policy of separate development but must abandon it completely,' is now tinkering with history'

spective".

"I wanted people to look at our history in its proper time frame," he says. "The same mistakes that we made were still being made in the United States and the ex-colonies. Then we carried them on for around 20 years longer. It was a time when we thought it would go away. But the average moderate white South

African family never hated black people. They made many mistakes, but they weren't arch racists as has been dictated by propaganda." De Klerk's "perspective" is selective. The Sharpeville massacre and the shootings in Soweto — two landmark incidents of the apartheid years — get a paragraph each in his book. Asked whether he felt compelled to speak out against the Soweto uprisings, which took place while he was an MP, he says: "I was very shocked by it and I was critical of Treurnicht's [then the former National Party leader] attitude to his brief."

But I was not in the country at the time. I was in Germany on my way to the U.S." Given that De Klerk has had more than 20 years to come up with an explanation one must assume this is the best he can do.

His attempt to rehabilitate his political legacy is made none the easier by the fact that his name is constantly matched against the most popular politician in the world. "I am not jealous of Nelson Mandela. I recognise him as a big man. But religiously speaking I don't think that any human being can be sanctified to the extent that they cannot make mistakes." It is clear that he believes in a multi-racial democracy, now that it is a reality. But it is difficult to see how he got there — it is as though he simply fell asleep and woke up at Damascus without having any of the blinding revelations on the way.

He comes from a long line of Afrikaaner heavyweights — his

great-grandfather was a senator, his grandfather a Boer war combatant and his father a cabinet minister.

"When I was a young man, I supported the idea of building a federation that would be a look little bit like Europe," he says. "The Zulus would have Zululand, like the French have France, the Xhosa would have their own country like the Germans and the Afrikaans would have theirs, and all these different nation-states would be held together by something like the European Union."

"But there was a lack of international support for this and the majority of blacks resisted it. They didn't want a slice of the cake, they wanted the whole cake and to have a say in how it was divided." And then there was that other nasty business — the racism. "Things were done which were morally indefensible. The humiliations, the divisions of people, the forced removals. That was wrong." Within a few years he says he realised that the races in South Africa had lived side by side for too long for any separation to be effective or anything other than forced.

"It was like an omelette," he says, contributing yet another culinary metaphor to racial discourse alongside the melting pot and salad bowl. "An omelette which we couldn't undo."

The Last Trek, A New Beginning by FW de Klerk is published by Macmillan, £20.

— The Independent

Cyprus in new push for international peace force

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The government of Cyprus is to launch a new diplomatic drive for the deployment of an international force on the divided Mediterranean island, Foreign Minister Yiannakis Cassoulides said here Wednesday.

Cassoulides said the deployment of such a force, possibly organised by NATO, would allow the island to be demilitarised and could take place "even before we have found a political settlement."

The initiative follows a reduction in tensions in the region after the Dec. 30 decision by the Greek-Cypriot government not to proceed with the

threatened deployment of Russian ground-to-air missiles.

Cassoulides said the proposed peacekeeping force would require a U.N. Security Council mandate and could only go ahead with the agreement of Turkey, which has occupied northern Cyprus since 1974.

Once the international force was deployed, both Turkey, which has an estimated 35,000 troops stationed in the north of Cyprus, and Greece, which has a much smaller contingent in the south, would be expected to withdraw their forces.

The Greek Cypriot national guard would also be progressively disman-

ted. Cassoulides added that the Cypriot government, which has begun negotiations with a view to joining the European Union (EU), was prepared to meet the operating costs of the international force.

He said he would be pressing the initiative in upcoming talks with U.S. officials in Washington.

Cassoulides said Cyprus would be ready for EU membership in 2003 but acknowledged that he expected accession not to take place before 2005. A number of EU governments have repeatedly made it clear that there is no question of Cyprus being brought into the bloc while it remains

divided. A U.N. force of some 1,200 troops is currently based in Cyprus, charged with policing the green line that divides north and south.

Cassoulides said the international force he envisaged would be much bigger and would be deployed across the island.

He said he favoured a NATO force as both Greece and Turkey are members of the alliance, which could make deployment easier.

Cyprus has been divided since Turkey occupied its northern third in 1974 following a Greek-Cypriot coup aimed at uniting the island with Greece.

Libya has received 'most' guarantees for Lockerbie trial — Musa

CAIRO (AFP) — Libya has received "most" of the guarantees it demanded to allow the start of a trial of two Libyan suspects in the Lockerbie bombing, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said in an interview published Wednesday.

"Libya has got most of the guarantees and I hope that the two suspects will soon be extradited" by Tripoli to the Netherlands where the trial is set to take place, Musa told the London-based Arab newspaper Al Hayat.

"The Lockerbie case is on its way to being solved and the Libyan, U.N., U.S. and British authorities are about to reach a comprehensive agreement," Musa said.

In August, the United States and Britain agreed to holding a trial in the Netherlands of the

two Libyans suspected of masterminding the December 1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, that left 270 dead.

Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi accepted the compromise, but has called for the suspects, if found guilty, to be imprisoned in the Netherlands, not elsewhere. This has been rejected by London and Washington.

Musa's remarks to Al Hayat came as a British newspaper reported on Wednesday that secret talks involving a senior Saudi official were underway to secure the handover of the Libyan suspects.

The Guardian said that the Saudi ambassador to Washington, Prince Bandar Ben Sultan, had travelled to Tripoli last month to try and secure a deal over the affair.

Last minute update

By Jean-Claude Elias



THE ONE PC term you can't ignore or avoid is "update." You're used to updating your word processing software, your virus scanner, your web browser and of course your PC hardware every now and then. This week Chiptalk brings you an update on computer terminology. I won't insult your computer culture by explaining what MB and MHz represent. I will rather introduce some of the new or less known buzzwords in the trade, as well as some "new definitions for old terms" you thought you knew well...

in cache memory. Not yet on the market, in Jordan at least.

On the lighter side (received over the Internet from an anonymous source)

BIT — A word used to describe computers, as in "our son's computer cost quite a bit."

DISK — What goes out in your back after bending over a computer keyboard for seven hours a day.

ERROR — What you made the first time you walked into a computer showroom to "just look."

EXPANSION UNIT — The new room you have to build on to your home to house your computer and all its peripherals.

FILE — What your secretary can do to her nails six hours a day, now that the computer does her day's work in 30 minutes.

FLOPPY — The condition of a constant computer user's stomach due to lack of exercise and a steady diet of junk food.

IBM — The kind of missile your family members and friends would like to drop on your computer so you'll pay attention to them again. (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile)

MENU — What you'll never see again after buying a computer because you'll be too poor to eat in a restaurant.

PROGRAMMES — Those things you used to look at on television before you hooked your computer up to it.

WINDOW — What you have the computer out of after you accidentally erase a programme that took you three days to set up.

For comments or questions Jean-Claude Elias can be reached by e-mail at jeanclaudio@nets.com.jo

Arafat, Albright hold talks on 'revolving door' for prisoners

(Continued from page 1)

Rep. Sam Gejdenson, a co-host of a luncheon for Arafat, said continuation of the now-stalled peace process is the only hope for the region.

"There are lots of issues that have to be dealt with in the Middle East," he said in an interview. "The American role is to push this process forward."

Gejdenson, the senior Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, said he was "frankly fearful if we do not

do this in the near term it doesn't necessarily become easier in the future."

The other host is Rep. Amo Houghton, whose family donated the Wye conference centre where negotiations over the West Bank were held last October.

Albright is hoping the visit can give a push to the stalled land-for-peace accord the Clinton administration engineered between Israel and the Palestinians at Wye.

It calls for Israel to pull back on the West Bank in exchange for measures by the Palestinians to curb terrorism.

The latest flap concerns Israeli claims that five Islamists suspected in attacks in which Americans were victims had been set free.

Rubin said: "We have checked into this thoroughly, and we have not seen any evidence that would confirm the charges that the individuals released were involved in the killing of Americans."

The Palestinians had called the charges "nonsense."

Weizman cuts terms for Israelis who killed Arabs

(Continued from page 1)

The Israeli human rights group B'tselem quickly challenged Hanegbi, noting that while Israel had released Palestinians involved in anti-Israel violence, it had never pardoned an Arab convicted of murdering a Jew.

The group said that since 1987, Israeli civilians had killed 112 Palestinians in the occupied territories and only two of them were sentenced to life in prison for the crimes.

Both of these, Skolnik and

Nahshon Wohls, a U.S. immigrant who shot and killed a pregnant Palestinian woman in 1990, subsequently had their sentences reduced by Weizman to 15 and 13 years respectively.

Since 1987, 90 Israelis have been killed by Palestinians in the occupied areas, while several hundred more died in bombings and other attacks inside Israel.

Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon accused Palestinians of releasing prisoners who murdered Jews and rejected comparisons to Israel's deci-

sion to reduce sentences.

"All the steps were taken according to law. This is an entirely different situation," he told reporters.

The Israeli decision to cut the sentences of the five Israelis coincided with a public relations campaign by the Netanyahu government against the recent release by the PNA of several dozen Islamists, including up to 30 who Israeli says were involved in deadly attacks.

The Palestinians deny that any of those released played a role in the attacks.

'Smooth' change of succession underlines strength of country's institutions, analysts say

(Continued from page 1)

In yet another sign of improving relations with Gulf Arab states, the new heir met with Kuwait's Interior Minister Prince Mohammad Khalid Al Sabah. Their meeting resulted in an agreement to reopen Jordan's embassy in Kuwait, closed since 1991 because of Amman's perceived support for Baghdad following Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khuth is due in Kuwait Saturday for an official visit. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are planning to provide Jordan with oil at a reduced price, according to a report

carried by the French news agency AFP. Jordan presently imports all of its oil needs overland by truck from Iraq (see separate story page 3).

The move by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait could be another signal that relations with the Gulf states, which deteriorated during the Gulf crisis, could finally be on the mend.

"The transition of power has been very smooth and showed that the state and the institutional structure Jordan has built over the years were able to absorb the change," said another official, requesting anonymity.

Officials and ordinary Jordanians hope for a longer transition for Prince Abdul-

lah, said by a relative to "have developed excellent knowledge of many economic and political problems facing Jordan from being close to his father and from his work with the army and the country's intricate security portfolio."

The influential Muslim Brotherhood has welcomed his appointment. The spiritual leader of the largest political movement in the Kingdom was one of the first to be shown congratulating the Crown Prince during the two-day ceremony at Raghadan Palace, where Prince Abdullah shook hands with more than 10,000 well-wishers from around the country.

"The affection displayed by Jordanians to Abdullah underscored the popular confidence in the King's choice," Musa Shatwi, a sociology professor at the University of Jordan, was quoted by the Associated Press as saying.

"Jordanians are also eager for political reforms and they want to give a chance to the young chap, who appears to be following his father's policy and footsteps," he added.

While Prince Abdullah's political views and style of leadership are still untried, many Jordanians said the new Crown Prince appears to be a unifying factor for the Royal family after the change in succession as all his broth-

ers, cousins, and two uncles stood by him.

Prince Hassan was seen on state television attending ceremonies congratulating the new Crown Prince. The new and former Crown Princes kissed and embraced. His cousin Rashed, the son of Prince Hassan, appeared with Prince Abdullah at various meetings.

However, most officials do not expect major reforms promised by the King before his sudden return to the United States to materialise until after the country is assured of the Monarch's health. Meanwhile, Prince Abdullah and the government are trying hard to cope with running the

day-to-day affairs of the state. Officials and analysts have been vocal in dispelling foreign and Arab media reports casting doubt on Jordan's stability after the change in succession.

Still, the challenges that lie ahead for Jordan may be as dangerous as those the Kingdom has faced in the last 47 years.

While many analysts say it is too early to assess Prince Abdullah's performance and how he will handle the challenges ahead, others say the new Crown Prince, who enjoys the backing of the Hashemite family and the army, has the makings of a leader.

Consumers drain savings, fuel U.S. growth

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Roben Williams

JORDAN



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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Reestimation of annual rent value of buildings, lands will be conducted from beginning of next year

**** THE MINISTRY** of Finance is striving to fulfil the decision of the Cabinet which approved conducting a reestimation of the net value of annual rent of buildings and lands within the boundaries of municipalities in all governorates starting the beginning of next year, the ministry's secretary general has announced.

Secretary General Ra'fat Alami said this measure will be carried out in light of the many changes which occurred on buildings and lands as a result of construction expansion and the setting up of new municipalities. Consequently, he added, the rent value for residential buildings varies and makes a reestimation necessary

to achieve equality between all taxpayers in the society. The latest comprehensive reestimation took place in 1984.

Alami said the most advanced administrative and technical methods will be used in this process in addition to computers noting that the ministry will be training the committees which will be taking part in the reestimation task. Furthermore, the ministry will be taking all the steps to ensure that the process will be conducted smoothly, quickly and accurately to be able to complete the job within the specified period estimated to last for about 16 months (Al Aswaq + Al Ra'i).

Customs department improves efficiency by raising revenue to JD718 million

**** REVENUE FROM** customs reached JD718 million last year, JD40 million or six per cent more than the amount recorded in 1997, said Nazmi Al Abdallah, the director general of the Department of Customs. He attributed this unexpected rise to improved efficiency at the department especially when imports have noticeably declined and no new fees were levied.

The largest portion of the revenue came from the sales tax and customs fines for a total of JD640.5 million, 10 per cent more than the JD580 million

revenue registered in 1997.

Al Abdallah said the department will be setting up a directorate for "value and combating commercial cheating" to follow-up on prices of goods and to analyse them. "The outcome will then be forwarded to customs centres which, in light of available information, will either extend or refuse to provide the facilities based on the behaviour of those who deal with the department and the extent of their abiding with the laws and regulations.

Goodyear allies with Sumitomo Rubber

NEW YORK (R) — Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Co. said Wednesday it was entering a global alliance with Japan's Sumitomo Rubber Industries Ltd. and laying off as many as 2,800 people, or three per cent of Goodyear's workers, in a major overhaul aimed at making it the world's leading tyre maker.

Goodyear also reported that fourth-quarter net income rose to \$122 million from \$2 million a year ago, easily beating Wall Street expectations. Worldwide sales slipped to \$3.2 billion in the quarter from \$3.3 billion the year before, the Akron, Ohio-based company said.

Goodyear shares rose \$2.125 to \$52.375 in morning trade on the New York Stock Exchange.

The global alliance, based on a memorandum of understanding signed by Sam Gibara, chairman, chief executive and president of Goodyear, and Naoto Saito, president of Sumitomo Rubber, is subject to approval by each company's board of directors.

To demonstrate both parties' commitment to the overall relationship, establishment of a cross-shareholding is planned.

Goodyear plans to acquire a 10 per cent interest in Sumitomo Rubber and the Kobe-based company plans to acquire an equivalent dollar value of Goodyear shares. The U.S. tire giant said it will make a balancing cash payment of \$936 million to Sumitomo when the joint ventures are in effect.

The transaction will be immediately accretive to Goodyear as earnings per share, the company said. In addition, cost improvement and rationalisation will add a combined estimated \$300 million-\$360 million to the profits of the joint ventures during the next three years, and Goodyear sees total annual sales increasing by \$2.5 billion.

In Japan, Sumitomo Rubber will own 75 per cent of two joint ventures and Goodyear will own 25 per cent. Voting rights will be shared 70-30.

Goodyear said the reorganisation, which involves closing its plant in Gadsden, Alabama, by the end of the year and laying off 2,500-2,800 workers, would yield \$100 million-\$150 million in savings. Goodyear said it sees one-time reorganisation costs also of \$100 million-\$150 million.

Its alliance with Sumitomo and sweeping reorganisation come in response to the economic volatility in Latin America, the on-going Asian economic flu and inefficient operations in North America.

To cut costs, Goodyear said it will end tire manufacturing operations at its plant in Gadsden, which dates back to 1929 and is one of its five largest worldwide.

The company said it would shut the plant's tyre manufacturing by the end of the year, but workers will continue to mix rubber to be used at other sites. Goodyear will transfer production from its Gadsden plant to other U.S. plants that operate seven days a week at full capacity.

French company awarded contract to manage Amman's water sector

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — The government recently announced that it has awarded a \$55 million contract to a French firm to manage Amman's water and wastewater network.

Water and Energy Minister Hani Mulki said the French company, Lyonnaise des Eaux, the water division of Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux Group, will also train Jordanians in the management of this important sector.

The 51-month contract will provide water and wastewater management and maintenance to the Greater Amman Municipality. The company's objective is to improve water distribution by

reducing leaks and other losses in the existing water network.

Illegal use of water reportedly costs the treasury JD15 million in losses every year. The government estimates that more than 50 per cent of water intended to supply the country's citizens is lost annually to both a worn out water networks and illegal water usage.

The World Bank has granted a \$55 million loan for the duration of the contract to cover capital investments to rehabilitate existing water plants and networks and restructure the water services.

Jordan's population is expected to increase from 5.3 million in 2000 to more than

eight million by 2020 — a factor which will severely strain the country's water resources.

To prevent water shortage, the government is looking for more efficient use of water for both drinking and irrigation purposes.

The Greater Amman Municipality represents 45 per cent of the country's total drinking water consumption.

Mulki has signed an \$800,000 agreement with a local firm to dig two deep wells in Karak in order to examine the quality of the 30,000-year-old Disi aquifer, as a possible source of water.

Last October, the government solicited 51 local, Arab and foreign firms to pre-qualify for the \$730 million project on a build, operate and transfer basis to draw water to Amman from the Disi aquifer in the south of the country.

Mulki later announced that the World Bank appeared willing to guarantee the amount of money in loans to be obtained from commercial banks to help finance the project.

The Disi-Amman conveyance system will be transferred to the government after 20 years. It will entail drilling wells, building a pumping station and a 325-kilometre water pipeline from the Disi aquifer to the capital for the delivery of 100 million cubic metres by 2005.

Lautman: Changes in Jordan won't affect Israeli companies operating in Kingdom

THE CHANGES in Jordan, with the appointment of Prince Abdullah as heir to the throne, are not expected to affect Israeli companies operating in that country, Delta Galil chairman Dov Lautman said Monday. Delta is considered one of the Israeli companies most active in Jordan, with three garment factories in Irbid and another in Amman.

Lautman said Jordan's economic and social interests lay in continued fruitful cooperation. The Israeli factories, he said, provide employment for thousands of Jordanians. More than a thousand people are employed in Delta's factories alone.

Lautman said that, although he did not know Crown Prince Abdullah personally, his Jordanian partners said the Crown Prince was seen as continuing the way of his father, including fruitful, positive cooperation with Israel and Israeli companies.

"We're relaxed," Lautman said, "We're not in Jordan just due to the pro-Israeli regime. It's a matter of common economic interest, and therefore we have no cause for concern."

Some thirty joint ventures between Israeli and Jordanian companies are currently operating in Jordan, of which seventeen are textiles factories.

In this sector, the main activity is making-up in Jordan, and finishing in Israel, for products intended for export to the U.S. Fifteen of the ventures operating in Jordan export their goods to the U.S.

— Business Arena, Israel

VACANCY NOTICE

UNICEF BAGHDAD, IRAQ ASSIST. PROJECT OFFICER (NUTRITION) GRADE-NOB

Purpose:

Under the supervision of Project Officer Health/Nutrition, contribute to NUTRITION programme design and implementation, evaluation of programme/project activities, data analysis and progress reporting. Ensure proper management, distribution and utilisation of UNICEF provided inputs, monitor changes in nutritional status of women and children and effective coverage of services. The programmes are supported by UNICEF and carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and other related ministries.

Minimum Requirements:

- University degree in medical or nursing science with nutrition related postgraduate studies.
- Communication, analytical and training skills.
- Ability to work in an international and multicultural environment.
- Two years progressively responsible experience in public health and nutrition programme design, administration, monitoring and evaluation.
- Fluent in English and Arabic (Written and spoken)
- Knowledge of computer applications such as database, spreadsheet, Word processing and Windows required.

Only Iraqi Nationals can apply quoting Post No. IRQ99017.

Applications must be received by 15 February 1999

To: Asst. Admin./Personnel Officer, UNICEF Amman

P.O. Box 840028, Amman 11184, Jordan.

VACANCY NOTICE

UNICEF BAGHDAD, IRAQ INFORMATION OFFICER GRADE-NOC

Purpose:

Under the guidance of Section Chief (Communication Officer) responsible for development, planning, implementation and monitoring of information and communication strategies, to support the country programme in Iraq. It aims to improve the national capacity to plan, implement and evaluate research-based communication approaches and participatory methodologies for the mobilisation of individual action for children's rights.

Minimum Requirements:

- Advanced university degree in Information/communication.
- Ten years of experience in the relevant field of which 5 years in Emergency environment.
- Experience with UN/UNICEF an advantage.
- Ability to write clearly and concisely on the technical aspects of communication/information.
- Negotiating skills with all types and levels, from community to senior government.
- Proven ability to conceptualise, innovate, plan and execute ideas.
- Ability to supervise and direct staff.
- Strong analytical skills.
- Good knowledge of computer management and applications.
- Training skills desirable.
- Fluency in English and Arabic.

Only Iraqi Nationals can apply quoting Post No. 11862

Applications must be received by 10 February 1999

To: Asst. Admin./Personnel Officer, UNICEF Amman

P.O. Box 840028, Amman 11184, Jordan.

VACANCY NOTICE

UNICEF BAGHDAD, IRAQ PLANNING OFFICER GRADE-NOC

Purpose:

Under the guidance of Planning Officer and Programme Coordinator, responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the area based projects within the national programme in all areas. Contribute towards preparation of Situation Analysis including analysis of data, design, prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate assigned programme or specific project(s). Prepare sectoral documents for the Country Programme Recommendation and Plans of Actions. Undertake field visits to monitor programmes and conduct periodic reviews with counterparts. Participate in the development of workplan. Prepare programme/project status reports. Assist the Government in the development and/or introduction of new approaches, methods and practices in project planning, management and evaluation.

Minimum Requirements:

- Advanced university degree in Social Sciences or related field.
- Five years of progressively responsible professional work experience in project administration, monitoring and evaluation.
- Proven ability to conceptualise, plan and execute ideas as well as to transfer ideas and skills.
- Ability to research, analyse, evaluate and synthesise information.
- Ability to express clearly and concisely ideas and concepts in written and oral form.
- Good analytical, negotiation, training skills and ability to plan and organise.
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- Fluency in English and Arabic.

Only Iraqi Nationals can apply quoting Post No. 11268

Applications must be received by 10 February 1999

To: Asst. Admin./Personnel Officer, UNICEF Amman

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Everybody seems to want to tell you what to do today, and you ought to listen. It looks like they have excellent ideas. They can also support you with a plan you've already got going. Go ahead and pass the ball to the others around you who can help. They'll be glad to do that, and it'll make your life a lot easier.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) The work that's been piling up can't be put off any longer. Look at the bright side. Something you're doing today could be like money in the bank. It might actually be money in the bank. You don't get to spend it now, but it's nice to know it's there and growing.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Somebody you thought you knew very well could surprise you today, and this surprise is a good one. Perhaps you could set up a little surprise of your own. What does your sweetheart really like? Dinner and a show? On a Thursday night? Why not? Life can be a daring adventure, but it's up to you to make it happen.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) If you can scrape the money together, you could make a good deal on a household item. Somebody else's dilemma could be your lucky break. If you're there with cash in hand, you could get it for pennies on the dollar. A little sleuthing is required. Start by letting people know all the things on your wish list.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) People may not think of you as the intellectual type, but sometimes you are, and this is one of those days. By doing a little reading on your own, you could finally understand what an expert is talking about. If you just get to where you can carry on a conversation with folks in the know, your own expertise will grow much more quickly.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) You love to be of service to other people. You live your life so that other people can be happy, wealthy, healthy and even wise, but it wouldn't really be too wise of you to do that today — not if you still have to keep body and soul together. Go ahead and let yourself be generally rewarded for your efforts.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Today, you'll be able to talk people into doing just about whatever you want. But take care. The same is true the other way around, too. In other words, the person

you love and admire will be able to talk you into just about anything. Set a private place so you can follow through on those ideas.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) People will be in the mood to talk today. With a few leading questions, you should be able to find out whatever you want to know, and then some. Your local neighbourhood stool pigeons will be rattling on everybody else. Now that you know that's likely to happen, show a little caution. Somebody out there might be rattling on you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your friends are coming up with great ideas today, and they'd love to help with whatever projects you've got going. So let them in on your predicaments, as well as your joys and successes. One of them will come up with just the idea you've been looking for. It's always easier to figure out somebody else's dilemma.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Looks like people are yammering at you to produce results quickly. Take care not to get reckless. Now that you've put the safety precautions in, go ahead and race full speed ahead to accomplish your goals. If you're smart, you can actually generate more profits with less work, but to do it, you'll have to use your secret weapon.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) You're always looking for ways to stretch your imagination, and you're always seeking new horizons to conquer, especially intellectual horizons. You wouldn't mind travelling a little today, either. You just want to stretch your legs and your mind, and everything else. Don't go too far today, unless you can get tomorrow off as well.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) Looks like your love and maybe a little of your money could bring out the best in others. Do it in a way that encourages them to be strong and not dependent on you. A contribution you make could multiply exponentially. Don't make an investment that makes you feel good. Make an investment that produces results.

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Little support for Hoddle except from faith-healer

LONDON (R) — Sacked England coach Glenn Hoddle received scant sympathy on Wednesday and faith-healer Eileen Drewery blamed the media for his dismissal.

Hoddle, a devout Christian who believes in reincarnation, was forced to stand down on Tuesday for saying disabled people were being punished for the sins of a previous life.

A few hours before his fate was decided by the Football Association (F.A.), Hoddle's daughter Zara faxed a letter to the BBC pleading for understanding.

"If you would just take time to listen to what his explanation is then maybe you would understand a bit more. So, please consider it from my dad's point of view and hopefully everything will be back to normal soon," she wrote.

Hoddle told the Mirror newspaper: "I had managed to hold myself together throughout all this but that was the last straw."

"Someone told me Zara had written this note and I just started to cry," The Mirror was one of the few newspapers to offer any sympathy or support for the former England manager.

"The Mirror felt on balance that Glenn Hoddle should be allowed to remain in his job, but be barred from discussing his beliefs in public again," it said in an editorial.

The only other major backing for Hoddle came from Drewery, Hoddle's spiritual guru.

"It's a witch-hunt. The media were only interested in getting him out and they succeeded," she said in a television interview. "It would

have been impossible for him to carry on because of the media." She vowed to continue fighting on Hoddle's behalf, saying she had an "axe to grind".

The Times, which sparked the row by publishing the interview in

without him. "He had lost the support without which is was impossible to be the figurehead for the national game," The Times said in an editorial.

"He had failed to separate his rights of free speech from his duties

to quit, commented: "There could hardly have been a more shameful exit."

"Glenn Hoddle wasn't man enough to resign. He had to be booted out kicking and screaming, threatening to sue and blaming the media. Like a sent-off player arguing all the way to the touchline, he just made it worse." As Hoddle retreated from public view, the search began for a long-term successor to a job considered one of sport's most poisoned of chivalries.

Ex-Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson, the F.A.'s technical director, will be in charge for next week's friendly game with world champions France.

Middlesbrough's Bryan Robson, Kevin Keegan of Fulham, Aston Villa's John Gregory and Hoddle's predecessor, Terry Venables, have all been floated as permanent successors.

However Keegan, the former England captain, ruled himself out on Wednesday, saying it was "the wrong time" for him and he wanted to stay with Fulham. Robson has already said he did not believe he had the experience for the job.

Arsene Wenger of Arsenal and Liverpool's Gerard Houllier have also been mentioned and on Wednesday the F.A.'s acting chief executive David Davies did not rule out the possibility of a foreign coach.

He told BBC TV there would be widespread consultations. "We will move as quickly as possible to get the best possible person," he said.

Wilkinson favourite to be Hoddle's permanent successor

LONDON (R) — Howard Wilkinson is 6-4 favourite to become Glenn Hoddle's permanent successor as England coach, William Hill bookmakers said on Wednesday.

Wilkinson, the Football Association's technical director, is in temporary charge for England's game against France next week after Hoddle was sacked on Tuesday for remarks about disabled people.

Odds:

6-4 Howard Wilkinson
4-1 Kevin Keegan
David Platt
6-1 Terry Venables
8-1 Bryan Robson
12-1 John Gregory
Gerard Houllier
Arsene Wenger
16-1 Roy Hodgson
20-1 Gus Hiddink
Martin O'Neill
25-1 George Graham
Alex Ferguson
Ruud Gullit
Bobby Robson

which he stated his beliefs about reincarnation, said on Wednesday: "English football, as well as English public life, will be better

as one of the most influential men in the game with vast influence over the young." The Sun, which had called for the England manager

Charlton sends out English SOS to foreign coaches

LONDON (AFP) — Former England great Sir Bobby Charlton sent out a save-the-coach SOS to foreign coaches on Wednesday following the ousting of Glenn Hoddle.

Charlton argued the Football Association (FA) should break with tradition and appoint the best coach available, regardless of nationality.

The FA appeared to agree, saying it would not rule out a foreigner in the post for the first time.

"There's nothing wrong with appointing someone who is not English," Charlton said. "All football fans in this country want is to be proud of their football team and to see it win."

Hoddle's contract was terminated on Tuesday after he was quoted in The Times newspaper last week implying that disabled people were being punished for sins committed in a previous life. He said he had been misrepresented.

Charlton, a member of England's 1966 World Cup

winning side, added: "The appointment should be made on merit."

Earlier David Davies, the English governing body's boss, asked if the job would be reserved for an Englishman, told BBC radio: "The only thing we are looking for is the best person for the job."

"I would not rule anything out in that direction."

Leading English contenders Bryan Robson and Kevin Keegan have already ruled themselves out of the race, and there appears to be no apparent heir waiting in the wings.

Many commentators have said the job is so high-pressure and English expectations so high that the role is almost impossible to enjoy, while others have pointed to the dearth of top home-grown candidates.

Howard Wilkinson, the former manager of English Premiership side Leeds, has taken over as caretaker manager.

Several top foreign candi-

dates have also been ruled out.

Manchester United chairman Martin Edwards on Tuesday ruled Alex Ferguson out to replace Hoddle.

Liverpool's French boss Gerard Houllier also said he would not apply, saying: "It is out of the question."

Former England midfielder David Platt is another English name which has been thrust forward.

His departure as supervisor with Italian club Sampdoria on Tuesday, coincided with Hoddle's sacking. Already there has been speculation that Platt could link up with Wilkinson.

Wilkinson is the only Englishman to manage a club side in the English Premiership title this decade.

Last year's championship was won by Arsenal, under Frenchman Arsene Wenger. Scotsman Ferguson, George Graham and Kenny Dalglish have also taken sides in the Premiership title in the 1990s.

Sammer on way back — Vogts

BONN (AFP) — Former European player of the year Matthias Sammer is poised to return to football after a year on the sidelines with injury, former German national coach Berti Vogts claimed in Sport-Bild paper. Vogts made the claim after a phone call with the sweeper who starred in his country's 1996 European Nations Cup victory in England.

Doping summit quickly reverts to minimum programme to keep semblance of unity

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — IOC officials conceded Wednesday the world doping summit would fail to finalize the creation of an international anti-doping agency or impose uniform minimum sanctions.

The inability to solve those two key issues ripped the heart out of the conference and left the IOC struggling to come to any concrete resolutions by the end of the meeting Thursday.

"Perhaps we can agree on the principle of an agency but at the end of the meeting you will not have an agency decided in detail," IOC drug chief Prince Alexandre de Merode said after two days of bitter dispute over who should lead the body.

"It is clear that it needs more study later," de Merode said, saying the issue could not be settled by Thursday's end of the meeting.

The goal of setting a mandatory minimum two-year sanction for serious drug offenses also faded under the pressure of major sports federations, who argued such bans would inevitably be struck down by civil courts.

The world soccer federation FIFA insisted it would never bow to a two-year sanction. The IOC relented.

"My response to FIFA is 'yes'," said Judge Keba Mbaye, who headed an IOC group on the sanctions issue. He said FIFA would be allowed to apply suspensions under two years.

The IOC had threatened last year to kick federations out of the Olympics if they refused to back the proposal of a two-year ban.

Cycling had also questioned the wisdom of a two-year sanction.

Track chief Primo Nebiolo, representing the 28 Summer Olympic federations, offered a compromise proposal under which federations would be able to cite "exceptional circumstances" in applying bans of less than two years.

Marc Hodler, leader of the seven winter sports federations, backed Nebiolo's proposal.

The move to soften the two-year sanction under leading athletes, including former

Olympic champions Johann Olav Koss and Sebastian Coe. "We have to hold our nerve, we have to hold the line," Coe, the British 1,500-metre runner, said.

Germany's Roland Baar, a member of the IOC's athletes committee, suggested soccer should be kicked out of the Olympics if it can't accept a two-year sanction.

"If soccer, or whoever, cannot accept the IOC rules, then they cannot be part of the IOC. It's a very simple thing," Baar said.

Meanwhile, finger pointing and raw criticism continued to dominate the meeting as much as calls for a unified stance on doping.

European delegates lashed out at the United States for making proposals for thorough reform, saying it was seeking the high moral ground while it was unable to control the doping issue at home.

"They should not take the others for being naive and small people," said French Olympic Committee president Henri Serandour. "They should stop giving us lessons. They want to appear whiter than white."

Former Olympic middle-distance champion Coe also criticized the U.S. position.

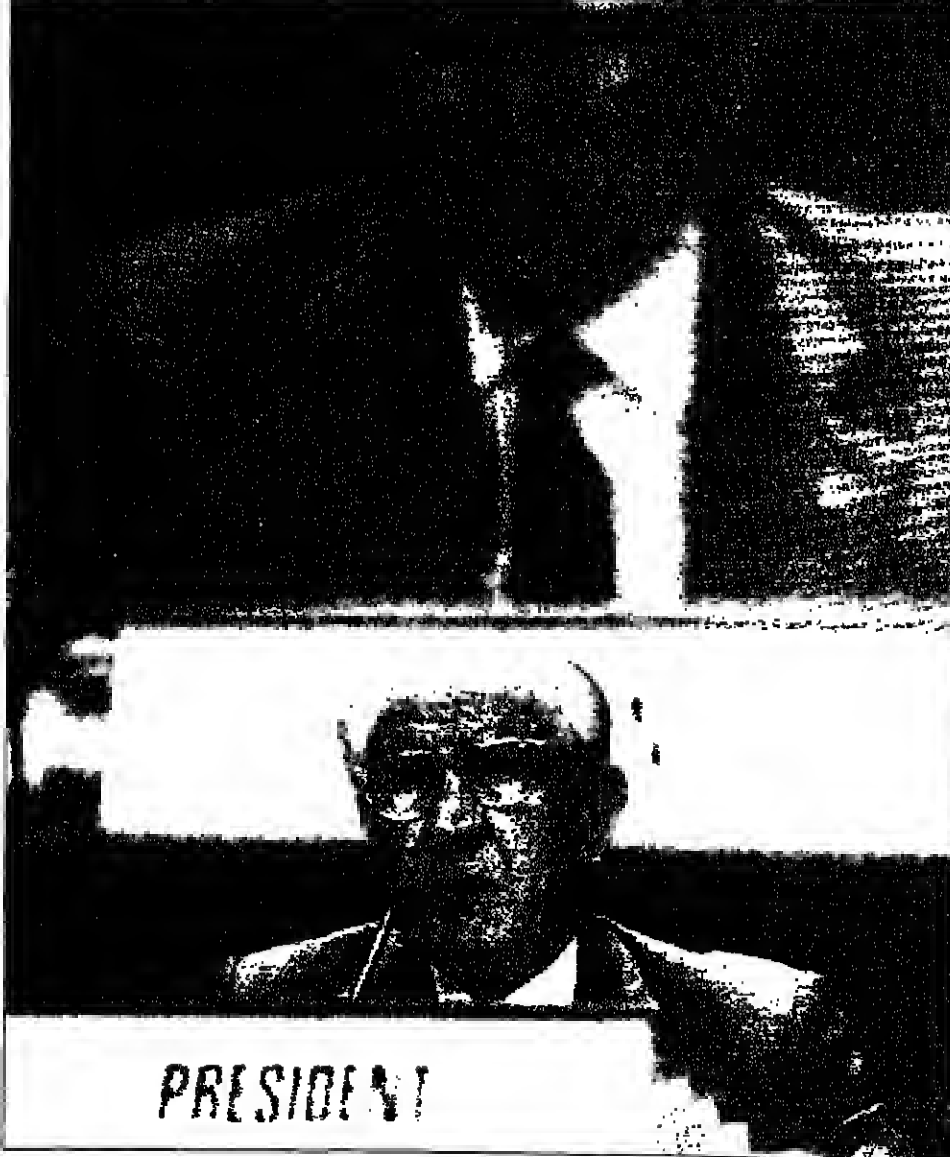
"I say to those countries you can have a contribution to make to the debate, but come to the table after you have first cleared your own backyard," he said.

Coe, gold medalist in the 1,500 meters at the 1980 and 1984 Olympics, cited the case of U.S. sprinter Dennis Mitchell. Coe noted that Mitchell escaped a doping ban on grounds that his positive test for testosterone was the result of having sex and drinking beer the night before.

"This stretches confidence and credibility to the breaking point," Coe said.

Even Hein Verbruggen, head of the world cycling federation (UCI), joined the criticism even though his sport has been widely discredited after the doping scandals at the Tour de France last July.

The IOC was scrambling to save its highly-touted world conference from failure on other fronts, seeking to revise



International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Juan Antonio Samaranch speaks at the opening session on the second day of the IOC World Conference on Doping in Sport at the Palais de Beaulieu in Lausanne, Feb. 3. Plans for IOC boss Samaranch to run an international anti-doping agency appear to have been scuttled by the Salt Lake City corruption probe. Delegates at the three-day conference in Lausanne are instead demanding that someone outside the IOC take charge to ensure the agency's independence (AFP photo)

some of its maligned proposals. "They were projects, not decisions," said de Merode, adding compromises would be drafted during Wednesday's session.

Hopes that the doping conference would restore some status to the IOC were dashed almost as soon as the meeting opened. Some criticized the conference for being nothing more than a talk shop where little could be

achieved. "We are the biggest federation with 240 million members and we get three minutes to talk," said FIFA medical chief Michel D'Hooghe. "This is ridiculous."

The agency to coordinate random drug testing and other doping control matters around the globe was slipping from the IOC's grasp. The United States and the 15-

nation European Union both objected to core issues within the IOC proposals forcing de Merode to give up any hope of finding enough compromise to set up the structure of the agency.

De Merode conceded the proposal on the doping of the agency was badly drafted and had caused unnecessary discord. "There were small errors in the document. It happens."



An athlete races to the finish line in the Men's Alpine Ski Event of the Asian Winter Games in Yongsong Feb. 3. The eight-day long Winter Games comprises 43 events in seven sports with 1300 athletes, referees, officials and judges from 16 Asian countries (Reuters photo)

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CINEMA	TEL: 361-1144	CINEMA	TEL: 361-1144	CINEMA	TEL: 5699238	CINEMA	TEL: 5677431	CINEMA	TEL: 5934793	CINEMA	TEL: 5934793	CINEMA	TEL: 5934793
PHILADELPHIA '1'		PHILADELPHIA '2'		PLAZA		CONCORDE		GALLERIA 1		GALLERIA 2		Hisham Yanes Theatre	
Bruce Willis .. in		Adel Imam, Wafa' Amer & Kamal Shinawi .. in		Comedian A'del Emmam .. in		Adel Imam, Wafa' Amer & Kamal Shinawi .. in		ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria		ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria		SOON...	
MERCURY RISING		ALWAD MAHROUS TBA' AL WAZIR		AL ZA'EEM		TBA' AL WAZIR		THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY		LETHAL WEAPON 4		ILHAQ YA TARAWNEH	
Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30		Shows: 10:30, 8:30, 6:15, 3:30, 12:30		Shows: 12:15, 3:15, 6:30, 9:45		Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Hisham Yanes & Amal Al Dabbas	
						CONCORDE '2' Sleepwalkers				MULAN			
						Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only				Shows: 3:30, 5:00			

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

